University of Alberta

A Geography of the Imaginary: Mapping Francophone Identities and Curriculum Perspectives in the Postcolonial Present

by

Laura Anne Thompson ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Secondary Education

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 2008

Library and
Archives Canada

Published Heritage
Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque et
Archives Canada

Direction du
Patrimoine de l'édition

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-45616-3
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-45616-3

NOTICE:
The author has granted a non-exclusive license allowing Library and Archives Canada to reproduce, publish, archive, preserve, conserve, communicate to the public by telecommunication or on the Internet, loan, distribute and sell theses worldwide, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, in microform, paper, electronic and/or any other formats.

The author retains copyright ownership and moral rights in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

AVIS:
L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque et Archives Canada de reproduire, publier, archiver, sauvegarder, conserver, transmettre au public par télécommunication ou par l'Internet, prêter, distribuer et vendre des thèses partout dans le monde, à des fins commerciales ou autres, sur support microforme, papier, électronique et/ou autres formats.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur et des droits moraux qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

In compliance with the Canadian Privacy Act some supporting forms may have been removed from this thesis.

While these forms may be included in the document page count, their removal does not represent any loss of content from the thesis.

Conformément à la loi canadienne sur la protection de la vie privée, quelques formulaires secondaires ont été enlevés de cette thèse.

Bien que ces formulaires aient inclus dans la pagination, il n'y aura aucun contenu manquant.

Canada

Abstract

In the province of Alberta, the recent phenomenon of French-speaking newcomers, who are multicultural, multiracial, multilingual, multiethnic and multifaith, is putting into question the concept of a collective Francophone identity in Canada. On the one hand, the notion of a collective Francophone identity has been evolving for several decades. On the other, changing demographics are challenging the already elusive concept of Francophone identity across Canada, thus making the notion increasingly difficult to define. The question therefore remains: who is Francophone in Canada?

Given the increasing pluralism in Francophone communities in Alberta, it is critical for the Francophone educational milieu to reflect and value the diverse nature of lived Francophone experiences. The distinct mission of Francophone schools outside Québec is to enable official language minority students to develop a Francophone identity and a sense of belonging to the Francophone community. If the Francophone school plays a fundamental role in integrating language, identity, culture and community, then what happens when the face of the francophonie itself changes? By emphasizing the importance of diversity and respect for differences, my research study is an attempt to highlight ways in which issues of Canadian and Francophone identities can be approached to recognize our differences as well as some sense of Canada and the francophonie we are (becoming) familiar with.

As a Francophone teacher-researcher in a minority setting, I am particularly drawn to explore how Grade 7 students perceive and construct the francophonie and their Francophone identity as lived in Alberta. Specifically, I consider how stories of history, memory, language and geography explore the lived experience of Francophones in

Alberta, especially during an era of increasing pluralism. By paying attention to students' lived experiences and to my own, and by analyzing the complex ways in which students negotiate local contexts and conditions with postcolonial interests and influences, this qualitative research can help educators explore the problems and possibilities of a plural francophonie in Alberta and Canada.

À mon cher époux, Derek,
whose love and support never wavered

À ma mère, Gizèle,
qui m'a appris l'importance de l'accueil et de la créativité

To my father, Len,
who taught me the craft of writing and speaking

À mes soeurs, Renée et Rachel Denise,
qui m'ont écoutée

Acknowledgements

Qu'est-ce que signifie « apprivoiser »? dit le Petit Prince.
--C'est une chose trop oubliée, dit le renard. Ça signifie « créer des liens... ».
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1943)

A host of people, places and perspectives has helped me to grow and pay attention to the connections across a vast geographic, cultural and linguistic landscape that is the Canadian francophonie. The mapping of this dissertation owes a great deal to these various moments of experience that have linked past and present, real and imaginary. I want to thank the different people I have encountered on this reflective journey.

To Dr. George Richardson, my supervisor, whose guidance during the peaks and valleys of this mountainous project helped me to see the forest for the trees. I am grateful for his superb editing skills and personal and professional insights.

To Dr. Ingrid Johnston whose thoughtful feedback and encouragement made me truly appreciate the postcolonial nature of my work and the value of my research.

To Dr. Bill Dunn whose thoughtfulness made me reconsider empathy and belonging, and set me on a path to discover the meaning for myself as a budding scholar.

To Dr. Cynthia Chambers who modeled for me an attentive, mindful and deeply personal and pedagogical orientation to what it means to find a path with heart.

To Dr. Ali Abdi whose generosity of spirit propels me to take small steps and to be happy with these efforts (however small). His encouragement to follow with confidence and patience my pedagogical project has been inspiring.

To Dr. Dennis Sumara for his dedication to doctoral students and scholars-in-the-making.

To Dr. Cécile Larocque, who planted the seed of pursuing doctoral work during my B.Ed. training in 1995 and who always took the time since to meet in either Ottawa or Sudbury. For her kindness and spiritual and professional guidance I am truly thankful.

To the Richard Sheridan Carson Graduate Scholarship for Intercultural and International Understanding, the Mary Louise Imrie Graduate Student Travel Award, the Myer Horowitz Graduate Student Travel Award, and the ATA Educational Trust Award for financial support provided.

À la Fondation Baxter-et-Alma Ricard qui m'a accordé une bourse doctorale généreuse et m'a donné l'occasion de rencontrer d'autres boursiers à Montréal dans le cadre d'une réception annuelle. Je vous suis infiniment reconnaissante. Je suis honorée d'être une récipiendaire de la Fondation Ricard et j'ose espérer contribuer à la société canadienne.

To the administrative staff in the Department of Secondary Education, particularly, Dawne Cook, Donna Lauritsen and Curtis Champagne, as well as Betty jo Werthmann in the Dean's Office of the Faculty of Education, for their warmth and support.

To the graduate students in Dr. Sumara's two 610 doctoral seminar classes who provided intellectual and collegial support throughout my doctoral career. I owe special thanks and fond memories to Rob Nellis, Dwayne Donald, Patrick Howard, Eun Jeong Kim, Liz Taylor, and Loren Agrey. I am also indebted to Nicole Green and Joan Chambers, who have travelled long distances, both real and imaginary, with me, and have made this journey truly rewarding.

This dissertation has been written in the midst of the pleasures and pressures of being a classroom teacher, and I would like to thank those who have supported me on this personal and professional path: Louise Gagnon, Paylig Juniper, Suzanne Foisy-Moquin, Allain St-Cyr, Michel Lapointe, Rachelle Bruneau, Monique Gravel, Nicole Sabourin, Nicole Bugeaud, Larry Lynch, Lynda Last, and Yvon Mahé. Individually and collectively, these Francophone educators have shown me how to meet new challenges with courage, commitment and faith.

To my junior high school students who have also shaped my ideas about identity and community. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for having taught me the importance of living community, not just studying it.

Finally, to my husband, Derek, for his patience and love, and for his willingness to accompany me to the prairies of Alberta and to tame his wild rose on this great mutual expedition. His intellectual curiosity and kind heart continue to carry me as well as the time he took to teach me about loving and living and laughing.

C'est le temps que tu as perdu pour ta rose qui fait ta rose si importante.
Tu deviens responsable pour toujours de ce que tu as apprivoisé.
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1943)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 1

An Introspective: Situating the Study 1
- Mining for memories 2
- Stopping places along the way 9
- Introducing myself in the francophonie 15
- Emerging questions 18
- Significance of the study 30

Chapter 2 34

Language and Identity 34
- *Tisser de mémoire* 35
- Revisiting the origins of poststructuralism 37
- Defining structuralism and poststructuralism 41
- Reflecting on critiques of poststructuralism 52
- Theorizing language and identity 55
- Lingering reflections 67

Chapter 3 68

Curriculum Theory and Curriculum Studies 68
- Curriculum theory and revealing what is worthwhile 69
- Searching for an understanding of curriculum 70
- Looking back: Historical perspectives of Canadian curriculum studies 72
- Looking forward: Contemporary perspectives of Canadian curriculum studies 75
- Mapping authentic ways of knowing and being 82
- Revealing moments of métissage 86
- Exploring 'Where is here?' 90
- Providing a map to Canadian curriculum – and to ourselves 94
- Understanding the literary landscape of curriculum inquiry 97
- Answering the in-dwelling call 101
- Coming home: Lingering reflections in response to the call to "in-dwell" 106

Chapter 4 108

Curriculum Theory and Social Studies 108
- Social studies and citizenship education 109
- Defining the social studies 110
- Revisiting the purposes and goals of social studies education 114
- Examining recent developments in social studies education 128
- Revisioning the social studies in a plural society 142

Chapter 5 145

Research Methodology 145
- Context of the study 146
- A poststructural inquiry 146
- Table 1. Proposed integrated methodological approach 149
- Literary anthropology 151
- Site and population selection 153

Some reflections on being a teacher-researcher 156
Framework of inquiry 158
a) Student interviews 158
b) 'Teaching' unit 160
c) Student work: textual annotations and writing 161
d) Research journal 163
Identification of themes 164
Emergence of dual perspectives: Poststructuralism and postcolonialism 166
Mapping student narratives as a polyphonic francophonie 169

Chapter 6 **173**

Introducing the Participants **173**
Telling lives, telling stories: Six narratives 174
Telling narratives: Understanding Francophone identity 177
Léonie: Recalling Franco-Alberta 179
Jean-Michel: Humanity at heart 181
Brian: Longing for home 184
Sophie: Home is Africa 187
Rania: Half-and-half 189
Karen: On the move 192
Six narratives telling multi-faceted stories of Francophone identity 195

Chapter 7 **196**

A Postcolonial Interlude **196**
Taking pause: A postcolonial interlude 197
Defining postcolonialism and postcolonial theory 198
Reflecting on critiques of postcolonialism 201
Bridging postcolonialism and poststructuralism 204
Conceptualizing Francophone identity in a postcolonial world 207

Chapter 8 **209**

A Question of Identity **209**
Blurring the boundaries: Who and what counts as Franco-Albertan? 215
Living in a diaspora in *Alberta français* 221
Living in-between: Complicating hyphen(s) and home(s) 225
Imagining the nation(s): Understanding Francophone 'national' identity 233
Narrating the nation(s): Imagining multiple Francophone identities 237
a) Narrating the historical French Canadian Catholic nation 238
b) Narrating the bilingual and bicultural nation 241
c) Narrating a pluralist Francophone 'nation' 250
Re-narrating for the future: Re-imagining Francophone identity 255

Chapter 9 **259**

A Question of Language **259**
Troubling language at the roots 261
Troubling the historical route of Francophone education 269
Troubling the geographical route of Francophone education 279
Troubling the linguistic (cultural) route of Francophone education 288
Reconceptualizing the roots/routes of the francophonie 302

Chapter 10 **305**

A Question of Curriculum **305**
Engaging in personal and collective responses to text 309
Re-visiting the choice of *La Chasse-galerie* as a commonplace text 313
Exploring through collective conversation: The focus group experience 316
(Dis)Placing stories and identities: "The Québec-Alberta story" 321
Teaching pedagogical history: Where are Francophones from? 328
Being Francophone in Alberta: "Real-world" concerns 336
Re-searching Francophone identity: Towards a more pluralistic vision of Francophone curriculum perspectives 345
Reciting the francophonie 348

Chapter 11 **350**

A Retrospective **350**
Tracing Laura in Alberta, *les traces de Laura en Alberta* 351
Wandering and wondering about Alberta 352
Re-searching curriculum in hopes of seeing more 355
Reconceptualizing Francophone identity and curriculum in the postcolonial present 359
En guise de conclusion: Quand le soleil se couche à l'est 361

References 363

CHAPTER 1

AN INTROSPECTIVE: SITUATING THE STUDY

Two or three things I know for sure, and one of them is that telling the story all the way through is an act of love.
– Dorothy Allison (1996, p. 72)

Love consists in this, that two solitudes protect, and touch and greet each other.
– Rainer Maria Rilke

Moi j'viens du Nord
Moi j'travaille fort
Je fais d'la raquette...
Je fais d'la raquette...
Il faut dire que c'est pas mal fort

Le Nord où je suis né
Ainsi que mon courage et mon espoir
Que nos pères [et nos mères] nous ont donnés
– Robert Paquette (1970)

Mining for memories

1. A great-grandfather leaves Northern Ireland in the 19th century to come to Canada. He is not fond of Catholics nor the *Canadiens*. The Presbyterian can be seen parading on horseback down the streets of Toronto during an Orange Parade. He calls Ontario home. He is a proud man.

2. A grandfather leaves Canada to fight in the First World War. Although he is injured and spends six months in a British hospital, he returns safely to northern Ontario. He is haunted by nightmares for the rest of his days. He is also reminded daily of the Catholic and French Canadian presence in his home; his wife is both. Not surprisingly, the Presbyterian strictly forbids the practice of the Catholic faith and the French language in his home. He is a proud man.

3. A father leaves Canada to pursue graduate studies in theology at the University of Notre Dame, home of the Fightin' Irish. As a child, his mother sneaks him, his sister and his brother to English Catholic mass on Sunday mornings. Alongside their mother, he and his siblings spend countless hours in the home of his grandparents, where French is embraced. As a young adult, he works in the mines like his father. He earns good wages that afford him the privilege to study ecumenism in the United States. He is a proud man.

4. A daughter leaves the mining town to pursue a liberal arts degree in Toronto, like her father. Unlike her father, she studies in English and in French. Although she begins her junior kindergarten in English, she crosses the street to do the remainder of her elementary education at the French Catholic school. As a young adult, she learns from her French Canadian mother that it is her paternal grandmother that demanded this change. Now a teacher, she works tirelessly in the trenches of French first-language education. Although she can be seen riding on horseback in the splendid Rocky Mountains, she would rather be swimming in the crisp blue lakes of northern Ontario. However, she is making Alberta her home. She is a proud woman.

5. A granddaughter leaves Arctic Québec where her mother has been teaching to return to northern Ontario. Twice weekly, after spending the day at her Francophone elementary school, she attends her Aboriginal group. She learns to make a drum. She learns to play her drum and perform. Although she mines for memories of her Métis father, she embraces the French language, Francophone theatre and film. She plays to the beat of a different drum. She is a proud girl.

As I read and reread these five biographical and autobiographical descriptions, I am reminded of a family where lines of language, culture and identity are blurred. Over five generations, languages and cultures are interwoven with different coloured threads; the colours blend, sometimes beautifully, sometimes painfully, as places, people and pasts are interlaced. Admittedly, the colours do not entirely mix together in this tangled web: competing memories must weave themselves in two worlds, as child, grandchild and great-grandchild learn to cross the yarns of yesteryear in a continuous family tapestry. The orange filament all but disappears into the firmament of a living past.

All five family members carry the Thompson name. They also carry stories and memories – differing notions of nationalism, problematic moments of pride, and shifting senses of self. The surname Thompson, Anglo-Saxon in origin, does not normally conjure up multiple understandings of history, geography, language, and culture. Upon hearing 'Thompson,' Canadians tend to be more preoccupied with its spelling (is there an h and a p?). In fact, both English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians are so familiar with the family name that they deny the possibility of what else it could represent. The result is a personal and unceasing journey of learning and de-learning identity (Léger, 2001), of breaking down and breaking through, of living out a story (Novak, 1978) that is not unique to me or my family. The memories nestled in me retrace steps in Canadian history and collective memory, from the shores of Ireland to the forests of Canada, the intertidal zone of English and French, Catholics and Protestants, where northern Ontario, land of lakes and pines, becomes the ultimate lodging-place. In the process, readers can see how stories of resentment, prejudice, love and pride collide when memories are mined to produce ongoing personal and collective identities.

When my living past invites me to remember, I recall another family – a French Canadian family. I don't mean French Canada as in Québec, the usual definition; rather, I mean the larger Francophone family of *Acadiens* and *Franco-Albertains*, of *Québécois* and *Ontarois*. Because in this family are nestled personal and collective memories, too, stories of resentment, prejudice, love and pride. French is the promised language in this land of political boundaries and cultural borders. However, most Canadians continue to have narrow conceptions and perceptions of French Canadian identity (e.g. Bouchard, 2003; Dalley, 2002; FCFA, 2001; Stebbins, 2000).

As a Francophone born and raised in Ontario, with an English name, having studied and worked in different Francophone pockets of Canada, I have come to learn that the majority of Canadians know little about Francophones outside Québec. Generally speaking, Canadians, regardless of heritage or ethnicity, think of 'French Canadians' or 'Francophones' in relation to Québec. And it is no wonder. Much of Canadian history is written in terms of politics: language politics, constitutional politics, identity politics – all principally in relation to Québec. If it weren't for the French-speaking majority of Québec, then perhaps the Official Bilingualism Act of 1969 would not have been introduced. If it weren't for the Quiet Revolution and the rise of a French Québec independence movement, then perhaps the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms of 1982 would not have included linguistic and education rights for Francophones outside Québec and Anglophones in Québec. If it weren't for the failed Meech Lake Accord, then perhaps the portrayal of an English-French 'feud' would not contribute to narrow and popularized conceptions and perceptions of Francophones in Canada and Québec.

As families change over generations in terms of language, culture and religion, so too has the Canadian francophonie. Historically, Francophones living in Canada were called the *Canadiens*, and later *Canadiens français*. The French fact was relegated to the borders of Québec and, although *la belle province* continues to be the main centre of the French language in Canada, another dimension to the "French fact" has emerged. Canada's national Francophone community is comprised of diverse Francophone and Acadian communities which have their respective identities. For example, in 2004, Acadian communities in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island celebrated *l'Acadie*, after 250 years of exile. *Le grand dérangement*, as it is known in French, or the Great Deportation, as it is known in English, shaped Acadian (and Cajun) history and collective memory forever. In the words of Antonine Maillet, internationally acclaimed Acadian author, "History has taught us to be more like a fox than a wolf. All the gains we have made, we got them by being wily" (Aubin, 2004, p. 35). Such gains include education and linguistic rights primarily.[1] All Francophone communities in Canada, whether in Ontario, Alberta or the Maritimes, have had to learn to be "wily" at one time or another.

René Levesque, fervent supporter of a French independent Québec, once discarded Francophone communities outside Québec as "dead ducks." Prior to the Quiet Revolution, Francophones across Canada were *de la même grande famille*; we were all *Canadien français* – predominantly white, Catholic, French-speaking, and of French-Canadian culture. When Francophones in Québec became Québécois, the *Canadiens français* outside of Québec underwent an identity crisis. And Monsieur Levesque, convinced that there was no future for these French Canadians in the late 1960s, wrote them off. A name change ensued: Francophone communities outside Québec became *Franco-Colombiens, Franco-Albertains, Fransaskois, Franco-Manitobains,* and *Franco-Ontariens*. Perhaps of greater political significance was each province's struggle for French first language education rights. In 1890, there was the Manitoba School Crisis, when the provincial government abolished separate Roman Catholic schools and French language rights. In 1912, French lost its status in Ontario with the implementation of *Règlement 17* (repealed in 1927). In 1842, Father Lacombe established the first French-language school in Alberta and, although the North-West Territories Act of 1875/1877 permitted Francophones living in the Territories to use French as a language of instruction, future decrees, amendments and acts would increasingly limit the use of French in Alberta schools. By 1964, instruction in French was limited to one hour per day (Alberta Learning, 2001). In all three cases, a short-term compromise was reached: French-language instruction was conditional. In the words of Gabrielle Roy, internationally acclaimed Franco-Manitoban author:

---

[1] Behiels (2004) has written the first comprehensive account of Canada's Francophone minority communities' struggle to obtain language education rights. In his overview of Francophone leadership initiatives across provincial jurisdictions, he illustrates the historical, geographic, linguistic, cultural and administrative features that define the various provincial collectivities, describing New Brunswick's Acadians as a "model of renewal" for Francophone minority communities and Franco-Albertans as "the invisible community" (pp. 15-18).

> *Maintenant s'éveillaient les passions du racisme et, de notre côté, la crainte. Bientôt, sous la poussée du fanatisme, le gouvernement du Manitoba allait édicter la cruelle loi interdisant dans nos écoles l'enseignement de la langue française, sauf une heure par jour en milieu à forte prédominance canadienne-française. Ainsi, descendants des premiers colonisateurs du Canada, étions-nous, en notre*

> *propre pays, pris au piège, traités en étrangers, ou citoyens de deuxième ordre. Ce fut une sombre époque au Manitoba* (Roy, 2002, p. 22).

It would take decades for Franco-Manitobans, Franco-Ontarians and Franco-Albertans to fight for French first language education rights. In the case of Alberta, the first Francophone education authority was created in 1994, following the decision of determined Francophone parents to bring Alberta Education to the Supreme Court of Canada (*Mahé v. Alberta*).

In all instances, though, Catholic education and French-language education were intertwined – and under threat. As a child, I often heard from *Canadiens français* around me, the older generation, say: *Perds ta langue, perds ta foi.*[2] Indeed, Catholicism and French-language education were so closely knit that to think of a French Canadian other than Catholic was unfounded. However, in the wake of the Quiet Revolution and the ensuing rise of a different kind of French Canadian nationalism, Franco-Ontarians saw the creation of École MacDonald-Cartier, the first non-denominational Francophone secondary school in Sudbury in 1970. Franco-Albertans would open the doors of École Gabrielle-Roy, the first non-denominational Francophone elementary school in the province almost three decades later, in 1997. Although the implications of language and religion on traditional French Canadian identity have been enormous (e.g. Lacombe, 1993; Levasseur-Ouimet, 1999; Smith, 2003; Trottier, Munro & Allaire, 1980), currently, the dogmas of the Catholic religion are increasingly being relegated to the family or, in the case of Alberta, to the Franco-Albertan "establishment" (Dubé, 2002). Put another way, if assimilated, one may not necessarily lose their religion.

---

[2] The Catholic religion is made a vehicle of belonging (Novak, 1978), and in the case of Francophones outside Québec, it also offers a sense of belonging *uniquement en français* in a sea of English. *Autrement dit, si je parle français, vis en français, c'est grâce aux contributions de l'Église catholique.*

Increasing religious and ethnocultural diversity in Francophone communities outside Québec has greatly influenced modernist notions of French Canadian identity. Changing demographics and government policies are both contributing to redefining Francophone identity in Canada. Since the introduction of the Multiculturalism Act in 1971, Canadian society has become increasingly multicultural, multiracial, multilingual, multiethnic and multifaith. So too has the Canadian francophonie. According to the *Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada* (2001), between 15,000 to 17,000 French-speaking immigrants arrive in Canada each year. Although most immigrants choose to make large urban centres their new home, a larger number of French-speaking immigrants are settling outside of Montréal. Smaller centres where there is a critical mass of Francophones, such as Winnipeg, Sudbury and Moncton, are attracting more French-speaking newcomers (FCFA, 2001, p. 23). In fact, in 2003, Citizenship and Immigration Canada responded to this sizable increase and earmarked $9 million to promote immigration to Francophone communities outside Québec and to foster integration mechanisms of Francophone and Francophile immigrants (Canadian Heritage, 2004). Indeed, "La communauté francophone n'est pas 'une,' mais se caractérise par sa diversité" (Deniau, 2001, p. 59).

Furthermore, in the context of Alberta, the predominantly English milieu has recently been witnessing an influx of immigrants whose first known official language is French. Based on 2001 Census data from Statistics Canada, a total of 23.6% of Alberta's Francophone immigrants arrived since 1996 and, of the 8,000 or so French-speaking newcomers, approximately 24% came from Africa (FCFA, 2004, p. 8). Public policy on multiculturalism and immigration are changing demographics in Canada, including various Francophone communities. The recent phenomenon of French-speaking newcomers to Alberta, who are multicultural, multiracial, multilingual, multiethnic and multifaith, is putting into question the concept of a collective Francophone identity in Canada. On the one hand, the notion of a collective Francophone identity has been evolving for several decades. On the other, changing demographics are challenging the already elusive concept of Francophone identity across Canada, thus making the notion increasingly difficult to define. The question therefore remains: who is Francophone in Canada?

Stopping places along the way

Teaching, learning, and interpreting stories about Canada and the world of Francophones represent stopping places along the way to understanding large and complex issues of language, culture and identity and how they relate to curriculum inquiry in the Canadian context. I am a Canadian researcher interested in Francophone education and identity in Alberta. Whether I am travelling in Canada or abroad, teaching in Alberta or British Columbia, or studying in Toronto or Edmonton, I am preoccupied by the stories (not) told about the French language, Francophones, and Francophone education in Canada. As English-language historians are preoccupied with dominant perspectives of Anglo-Canadian history, I am engrossed – to the exclusion of other things – with minority perspectives of Franco-Canadian history.

The verb to "preoccupy" means to occupy beforehand, as in pre + occupy. It also signifies to engross to the exclusion of other things, but it is the third meaning that interests me – to prepossess, to bias (Oxford University Press, 2005). If being preoccupied about the status of the French language in different parts of Canada, the state of Francophone education, and the well-being of Francophones across Canada is the way I enter the history and memory of Canada, then I will – and have – bias(ed) my teaching and learning. In French, however, the verb "*préoccuper*" is both transitive and reflexive (De Villers, 2003). *Par exemple, à la forme pronominale, je me préoccupe de la langue française. En plus, je me préoccupe du bien-être des francophones du Canada.* The former represents worrying about the French language, while the latter signifies being interested in the well-being of Francophones. *Et comme je m'intéresse profondément à la francophonie, je la prends à cœur.*

Thinking of the French expression "*prendre à coeur*" reminds me of Chambers' (2004) quest of finding the path with heart. Generally speaking, Chambers (2004, 1999, 1998) explores ways of conducting research in the area of curriculum studies that matter to teacher-researchers: curriculum of place, of landscape, of métissage, of life. And in an attempt to create dialogues between and across different educational sites and discourses, it is important to (re)consider finding the path with heart. According to Chambers (2004), autobiographical inquiry matters for curriculum theory, the field of Canadian curriculum studies and the researcher, although it does not occupy an ethical place in the academy. This thoughtful and thought-provoking observation on Chambers' part does not surprise me. I have read many of her published works with keen interest and have heard her give poignant talks to graduate students of education. What does surprise me, however, is how my own autobiographical narratives could be topical, let alone ethical and meaningful. This leaves me to wonder how likely autobiographical narrative could be a critical site for critical inquiry in my own life. This also leaves me to ponder the question of ethics and research (methodology) as I prepare to embark on a qualitative research project that is close to my heart and one that I take to heart: the Francophone school community outside Québec. As Chambers (2004, p. 11) puts it, "You must explore and write the suffering and grief that comes from living in an imperfect world. But you must also make peace with the past and the present, and live into the future." Autobiography, while communicating the ways personal identities are formed, can also interrupt homogeneous discourses of national, cultural and linguistic identities. As I prepare to create opportunities for Francophone youth in Alberta to represent their identities, subjectivities will undoubtedly become intertwined. And as Behar (1996) and Chambers (2004) maintain, autobiographical narrative must deeply explore subjectivities and contexts. It is essential for the researcher to be completely involved in the inquiry and to represent both its intellectual and emotional dimensions in order to situate autobiographical narrative critically. As a result, critical autobiographical inquiry will wield individual and collective stories. As Richardson (1997) argues, "narrative is quintessential to the understanding and communication of the sociological" (p. 27) because making autobiographical sense of one's lived experience creates the possibility of understanding other people's lives (p. 31).

Re-reading Chambers' call to find the path with heart confirms my conscious and intuitive choice to research the issues of language, culture and identity in a Francophone school setting in Alberta as I attempt to understand more fully the past, present and future of Francophones in Canada and of myself as a Francophone Canadian. Another woman's work on the role subjectivity plays in research that seems to beckon me is Behar's (1996) *Anthropology that Breaks Your Heart*. Behar, in her own quest to understand "the presence of the past," attempts to recover the past of her family and her self. By writing in her personal experience in her research, she communicates the emotional involvement of studying what matters to her.[3] Behar asserts that there is a place for emotion in doing research. The researcher is called to weave her personal experience (i.e. emotional involvement) and her inquiry. A vulnerable writer must be willing to "consider the possibility that a personal voice, if creatively used, can lead the reader, not into miniature bubbles of navel-gazing, but into the enormous sea of serious social issues" (p. 14). As Richardson (1997) describes the role of autobiographical narrative, "the past can be retrieved and relived in the present. Narrative organizes the experience of time into personal historicity" (p. 30). Furthermore, "narrative makes possible the understanding of people who are not present. Narrative creates the possibility of history beyond the personal" (p. 31).

As I re-read Behar's strongly personal vision of cultural anthropology, she reminds me of my own longing for memory, especially that of my grandmothers, *Mémère* Brazeau and *Mémère* Thompson, my own sense of losing the French language – for myself and for others, especially other Francophones in a minority setting, and my overwhelming preoccupation of wanting to tell a different story of Canada, especially one that includes Francophones from across Canada and throughout the world. As Behar (1996) beautifully writes,

---

[3] Behar (1996) asserts that there is a place for emotion in doing research. The researcher is called to weave her personal experience (i.e. emotional involvement) and her inquiry. A vulnerable writer must be willing to "consider the possibility that a personal voice, if creatively used, can lead the reader, not into miniature bubbles of navel-gazing, but into the enormous sea of serious social issues" (Behar, 1996, p. 14). As Richardson describes the role of autobiographical narrative, "the past can be retrieved and relived in the present. Narrative organizes the experience of time into personal historicity" (p. 30). Furthermore, "narrative makes possible the understanding of people who are not present. Narrative creates the possibility of history beyond the personal" (p. 31).

> Loss, mourning, the longing for memory, the desire to enter into the world around you and having no idea how to do it, the fear of observing too coldly or too distractedly or too raggedly, the rage of cowardice, the insight that is always arriving late, as defiant hindsight, a sense of the utter uselessness of writing anything and yet the burning desire to write something, are the stopping places along the way (p. 3).

What Chambers (2004) and Behar (1996) have in common is that they both consciously choose to write about what matters to them. While one is a Canadian curriculum theorist and the other a Cuban-born Jewish anthropologist, both embrace memory as a way of knowing and autobiography as a way of witnessing. In other words, Chambers and Behar challenge conventional ways of doing research by offering autobiographical inquiry as a theoretical framework and a pedagogical practice to the fields of curriculum studies and anthropology.

Hence, my research project will tell two stories.[4] It will tell of a double quest: a quest for understanding the francophonie I inhabit along with students in a Francophone school community, and a quest for understanding the Francophone I am becoming. If I were to refuse to speak of how I have come to call myself Francophone during my quest to see how other Francophones see themselves and the world, then I would be, as Behar (1996) writes, "maintain[ing] the fenced boundary between emotion and intellect" (pp. 85-86). Reading Boler (1999) has helped me engage in a new way of seeing subjectivity in general and emotions in education in particular. Boler (1999) maps the emotional terrain of "feeling power," an emotional discourse that is at once political and critical. Her own consciousness-raising began when she realized that:

---

[4] The idea of parallel stories telling a double quest is inspired by Behar (1996). On the one hand, she values autobiography as a way of knowing and as a form of embodied knowledge. On the other, she defends the effort to mix the personal and the ethnographic, to investigate the tension between ways of

> emotion's exclusion from philosophy and science was not a coincidence... The boundary – the division between "truth" and reason on the one side, and "subjective bias" and emotion on the other – was not a neutral division. The two sides of this binary pair were not equal: Emotion had been positioned on the "negative" side of the binary division. And emotion was not alone on the "bad" side of the fence – women were there too (p. xv).

The use of emotions can be two-fold: as a form of social control and as a form of resistance (p. xv). While the former has cultural and gendered connotations, the latter emphasizes the connective and cognitive importance of emotions. Emotions, then, are epistemological; they help educators and students engage in critical inquiry regarding subjectivity, emotional experience, and transformation of worldviews (Boler & Zembylas, 2003, p. 111). As Boler (1999) argues, educators must address emotions within their classrooms, not only because most scholarly disciplines and pedagogical practices have not, but because emotions are "a worthy object of inquiry" and naming it as such will bring emotions into the public sphere (p. xv). Therefore, for Behar (1996), Boler (1999) and Chambers (2004), it is important not to render one's autobiography "obscene" or "bad," like we do death and dying and emotions in Western patriarchal culture, but rather to embrace one's subjectivity with vulnerability and emotion.

My intention is not to rush in telling a story that might upset some and liberate others (i.e. Anglophones and Francophones, or Québécois and Franco-Albertans). Rather, it is to embark on a journey with others to better understand a continually re-

---

knowing because subjectivity or "vulnerability" does and should play a role in conducting research with human subjects. This results in a more open way of doing research.

imagined (story of) Canada. Imagining new possibilities is required for the transformation, perhaps even the survival, of Canada and the francophonie. The Canadian francophonie, then, becomes a provocative site for theorizing how identity can evolve and be elusive. Questioning Albertans' and Canadians' assumptions about their own 'national' identities and histories is as important as Franco-Albertans and Francophone Canadians questioning what it might mean to call someone Francophone in Canada.

Introducing myself in the francophonie[5]

I travel often across Canada, and have since I was a young child. During my travels, I am inevitably asked where I have learned my French. When I respond at school and at home, the conversation takes an interesting turn. My mother tongue is French, I'll say, as I have learned it from my French Canadian mother – at home. I'll add that I've also learned French in a Francophone school, which I also consider home. And I continue to learn how to negotiate my responses to this question depending on the geographical, political, social and cultural contexts.

I have worked in various educational contexts in three Canadian provinces (Ontario, British Columbia, Alberta). I have also given presentations in different Francophone educational communities (Toronto, Ottawa, Moncton, Québec, Vancouver, Edmonton). Upon meeting other educators, I am inevitably asked what my maiden name is. When I respond Thompson, I am asked the same question. My birth name is Thompson, I'll say, as I have an Irish-Canadian father. I'll add that I'm from an exogamous relationship and, yes, I have been successful in maintaining my French. More important, I'll explain how my father's mother is Francophone. However, it is more important to the educator to know my mother's name. Upon hearing Brazeau, they are appeased. And I continue to learn how to negotiate responses to this question depending on the geographical, political, social and cultural contexts.

---

[5] The word francophonie is not capitalized here because it does not refer to the Francophonie, the international organization of 56 countries (200 million people) on five continents, for whom French is an official or commonly used language (OIF, 2007). Rather, the francophonie, with a small f, designates the totality of the Francophone community in a given region, province, territory or country (Alberta Learning, 2003; Tétu, 1992).

As I ponder on how I introduce myself in the francophonie and how others write me (or not) into the francophonie, I wonder how Francophone junior high school students in Alberta experience and interpret Francophone identities and stories of language, culture and identity. The experience of having travelled and worked extensively throughout Canada has provided me with a rich understanding of cultural differences that occur nationally, regionally and provincially. It has also offered me an opportunity to notice how Francophone identities vary with geographical, political, social and cultural contexts, and how they are shaped by stories of history, memory, language and geography. In my research project, I attempt to piece together various threads of collective and personal history and memory, while also painting a particular yet profound picture of the effects of language, culture and geography upon identity. In other words, what I am attempting to understand more fully is: How do youth in the Francophone school context in Alberta experience and interpret issues of language, culture and identity?

Admittedly, the short answer to this question is that Francophone adults and youth alike experience multiple subject positions. The long answer is that this complex question involves searching for persistent and contradictory patterns, finding a new language to describe them, and applying a poststructural and curricular theoretical framework to contemporary problems in Francophone education. Poststructuralism teaches us that identity is always fluid and shifting and that narratives of identity are conflicting and continuous (Belsey, 2002; Fine, 1994). It also provides me with a terminology to analyze the binary opposition between French and English, Francophones and Anglophones, Québécois and Francophones outside Québec. It challenges me in rethinking concepts of identity (e.g. Canadian national identity, Francophone national and regional identities). Above all, it helps me examine the complexities of being both the researcher and the subject of the research. Again, I am reminded of Chambers (2004) and Behar (1996) who make autobiographical inquiry possible but, more importantly, remain open to the possibilities of other narratives, of future questions. In Belsey's (2002) words, poststructuralism encourages an openness vis-à-vis what is yet to come: "Are you able to think beyond the limits of what is already recognizable? Is it possible to acknowledge the hitherto unknown?" (p. 104).

Such a lengthy and open response must also consider the implications of historical, political, regional and linguistic debates that inform the discourses of identity and representation in the larger Canadian context. After all, poststructuralism is about language and cultural exchange. Belsey (2002) defines this group of theories as "concerning the relationship between human beings, the world, and the practice of making and reproducing meanings" (p. 5). If the English and French languages divide the world up differently (Willinsky, 1998),[6] then it follows that language intervenes between meanings and ideas, between human beings and their respective worlds (Belsey, 2002). Therefore, the multifaceted contributions of history, memory, language, culture and geography must be reconsidered in order to shed light on Francophone identity formation in the particular context of Alberta. If my doctoral research allows for educators and students to take greater cognizance of the multiple ways the Francophone experience is lived in Alberta, then re-imagining Canada and the stories of Francophones in Canada, and specifically in Alberta, will prove a useful exercise.

Emerging questions

i) Remembering to understand

I remember my Grade 8 teacher at École Saint-Paul.[7] Mme Duguay is *spécial*, as we say in French, and it does not necessarily mean special in the positive sense of the term. Mme Duguay is to be feared. She is short in stature, but tall on commands. Even the toughest boys are afraid of her.

I don't like her. At least, I try not to like her. I know she likes me. The other students say so, short of accusing me of being teacher's pet. Now that I am a teacher, I like students like me: we listen, read well, ask questions, do our homework, and behave. We are respectful. Even though I am a teacher and should know better, I still do not particularly like her – although I respect her – now that I am a committed Francophone.

As an elementary school student in Sudbury, Ontario, I remember mostly Francophone families with two French Canadian parents and a slowly increasing number of mixed marriages. I remember Mme Duguay explaining the difference between *marriage* and

---

[6] Willinsky (1998) points to Canadian identity politics in asking 'Where is here?' and suggests that educators and students should attempt to make sense of the "divided world" by understanding the histories and legacies of where they live. In other words, "we need to learn again how five centuries of studying, classifying, and ordering humanity within an imperial context gave rise to peculiar and powerful ideas of race, culture, and nation that were, in effect, conceptual instruments that the West used both to divide up and educate the world" (pp. 2-3). In the Canadian context of 'French-English' relations, it is important to understand the legacy of the British empire both in and outside Québec as well as the legacy of France in Québec, two uneven legacies that have shaped ideas about language, culture and nation, two European legacies that continue to play a role in how competing languages, cultures and 'nations' divide Canada.

[7] All names of schools and persons have been changed to ensure anonymity.

mariage. Anglophones marry twice (i.e. there are two 'r's), while Francophones "*se marient*" only once (i.e. there is a single 'r'). This image leaves an impression on me for two reasons: first, after this brief lesson on the 'bad' Anglophone and the 'good' Francophone, I will always spell the two words correctly; and, second, the Francophones I know are primarily Catholic and, yes, they are all happily married, except for the ones married to Anglophones – my family being a prime example.

What I also don't like about Mme Duguay, but have come to appreciate, is her emphasis on the word *papa* when I am preparing to enter high school in Grade 9. We bump into each other at Mac's Milk. As she enters the corner store, she does not seem particularly happy to see me. In her usual cutting way when speaking of English or Anglophones, she asks me if I still plan to go to *l'école de papa*. So what if I am going to my dad's high school? What's it to you? Of course, I didn't reply in such a tone; my parents would've been horrified. I was taught to respect teachers.

Although I can still hear her particular emphasis on *papa* and feel the cringe in my body, I know she is right: an English school is no place for a Francophone. Perhaps the students in my Grade 8 class were right, too. Mme Duguay truly does like me. She is looking out for me, admittedly in ways my dad does not know how.

"Unless we remember," E.M. Forster observed, "we cannot understand" (source unknown). If it weren't for Mme Duguay, or at least my memory of her in Grade 8, I could not understand the frustration, perhaps anger, in her voice. I, too, as a teacher in a Francophone school system outside Québec, get frustrated – even angry. I get angry when I learn that my students leave the Francophone school for a large English public high school or a popular Catholic French Immersion one. I grow sad when I learn that within two years they can hardly speak French. And when I catch myself discussing the choices of my students with them, sometimes gently, sometimes firmly, I cannot help but imagine myself as Mme Duguay.

Francophones in Alberta are as diverse as the landscape of the province itself. But what does it mean to be Francophone? What does it mean to be Francophone in Canada, in a minority setting? What does it mean to be Francophone in Alberta in an era of increasing pluralism? As I ponder these related questions, I am teaching in a Francophone high school; I am reviewing national publishers' proposals for the new Alberta social studies curriculum; and I am presenting Francophone perspectives at teacher and academic conferences. As I wonder about the nature and scope of what it means to be Francophone – in local, national and international contexts – and as I consider the future of the francophonie in Alberta, in Canada, on Planet Earth, I cannot help but be drawn to the problems and possibilities of a plural francophonie.

As mentioned earlier, smaller centres with a critical mass of Francophones (e.g. Sudbury, Moncton, Edmonton) are attracting an increasing number of French-speaking immigrants from various ethnocultural, racial and religious backgrounds – and Citizenship and Immigration Canada is encouraging the integration of Francophone and Francophile newcomers in Francophone communities outside Québec (Canadian Heritage, 2004). As a teacher in the Francophone school system, the challenge to me is obvious in our schools. On the one hand, the vast majority of Francophone schools outside Québec are Catholic and an increasing number of immigrants are not. On the other hand, although the largest number of Francophone immigrants continue to arrive from Western and Mediterranean Europe, an increasing number do not (e.g. 24% of Francophone immigrants to arrive in Alberta since 1996 are from Africa). While these challenges should be seen as opportunities, two public policies seem to clash: multiculturalism and official bilingualism. Consequently, the notion of pluralism fits awkwardly within traditional constructions of Francophone identity. In other words, "les francophonies canadiennes sont des microcosmes qui éclairent de façon aiguë à la fois les balises et les limites des politiques du gouvernement fédéral et l'état du fédéralisme canadien" (Couture & Bergeron, 2002, p. 16). Not only does Canadian national identity need to be redefined, but so too does the future of Francophone communities across Canada as both 'national' identities will be played out in the context of multiculturalism.

In the meantime, however, the development and vitality of Francophone communities such as Sudbury, Moncton and Edmonton are dependent principally upon the local Francophone school.[8] In Canada, Francophone schools in a minority setting play a fundamental role in integrating language, identity, culture and community. The distinct mission of Francophone schools it to enable official language minority students living outside Québec to develop a Francophone identity and a sense of belonging to the Francophone community. In Alberta, the Ministry of Learning (2001) defines the role of Francophone education in the province: "To ensure the transmission and vitality of French language and culture and to contribute to the growth and flourishing of the Francophone community" (p. 11). If the Francophone school is at the heart of the Francophone community, then how do teachers and the mandated curricula they use assist in the development of a Francophone identity in youth? In turn, how does an increasingly diverse school community create a sense of belonging? If, as a collective, we are to understand more fully what it means to be a Francophone in Alberta – and Canada, then we must ponder questions of language, identity, culture and community. We must also consider questions of history and geography in the face of increasing diversity within the Francophone population across Canada. Above all, we must consider questions of memory. In this regard, novelist E.M. Forster's statement is haunting, yet reassuring: "Unless we remember, we cannot understand."

In my research, I propose to embark on a personal journey of traversing the francophonie of the heart and the mind. As I wander through the hallways of my high school, the hollows of my heart and the highways of my mind, I wonder about the identity of Francophones. I wonder when, where and how Francophones experience being Francophone in Alberta. As a teacher in the Francophone school system, I wonder how Francophone youth understand the francophonie and how their understandings of it have evolved. I wonder how they experience the French language and culture in Alberta. I wonder how attachment to a particular region of Canada or the world influences their sense of Francophone identity. I wonder how they remember their experiences and the experiences of others.

---

[8] While there are similarities between Francophone communities in the various provinces, there are differences depending on the particular history, geography and collective memory of these groups (e.g. Behiels, 2004; Léger, 2001; Levasseur-Ouimet, 1991). For example, the pan-Canadian organization *Fédération des Francophones Hors Québec*, created in 1975, was renamed the *Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada* (FCFA) in 1991 to recognize the divergence in

ii) Remembering to survive

I wonder about École Saint-Paul. A few years ago, during our weekly telephone conversation, my mother announced that the school board was considering closing Saint-Paul. But what about Saint-Christophe, I asked defensively? I began to act as a city councillor, although I left Sudbury seventeen years ago. Everyone in our part of the woods knows that École Saint-Christophe has the better gym, but close Saint-Paul? *Sacrilège*!

I understand the politics surrounding decreased enrolment. I even understand the politics of competing school districts, well, most of the time. Above all, I strive to understand the politics of Francophone school districts and their impact on the community at large. Growing up in Sudbury, I repeatedly heard young and old alike say how "the French are taking over." When news hits *The Sudbury Star* about a Francophone school closure, the French surely can't be taking over. "See, Laura? The French are dying off... They're not having babies like they used to. We all need to speak English – one language, one country."

Recently, an Alberta Education employee thought it wonderful that I was a teacher at Alberta's largest Francophone high school – the "jewel" of the Franco-Albertan community. During his teaching career, he had worked only in the French Immersion system. To him, I had the distinct privilege of working in a Francophone system with colleagues like me – missionaries. I kindly reminded him that not all Francophones are committed to the cause.

I don't worry about the French language *per se*. Rather, I worry about the future of the francophonie, its people. Admittedly, the French language has a major role to play (one

---

identity between Franco-Québécois and Franco-Canadians in the other provinces and territories (Behiels, 2004, p. 26), and especially the strong sense of Acadian identity in Atlantic Canada (FCFA, 2001).

language, one nation?). So, too, does identity. My vision of being Francophone is this: *c'est avant tout une question identitaire*. Being Francophone is primarily a question of identity, and the French language will follow. Not all Francophones share my vision; in fact, I would argue that most Francophone educators outside Québec would say that being Francophone is *avant tout une question de langue*. If a Francophone is not proud of the French language, of their French, of their mother's French (i.e. mother tongue), then they won't speak it well. And so I wonder about Francophone communities, so to speak.

While Saint-Paul is still open, I wonder if it will close its doors one day. Years ago, there was talk of closing Ontario's landmark Francophone public high school, which opened its doors in Sudbury in 1970. They didn't – still there is talk. My father, like most Anglophones, doesn't truly understand why Francophones insist that schools with decreasing enrolments stay open. It's not simply about numbers, it's about politics – cultural politics. It's about justifying our existence. It's about staying alive. If we can't remember our collective fight for Francophone education, whether it be in Ontario or Alberta, then we won't survive. As Timothy Findley (1990) observed, memory is survival.

Remembering is hard work. When discussing the future possibilities of Francophone schools and Francophones in Alberta, it is crucial to understand and appreciate the travails of the past. In Canada, there has been little descriptive qualitative interpretive research done on Francophone youth and identity formation as well as on Francophone teacher identity, although it is acknowledged that identity is at the heart of Francophone education (Alberta Learning, 2001; Bernard, 1997; Gérin-Lajoie, 2003; Laplante, 2001; Levasseur-Ouimet, 1994). Again, if the Francophone school plays such a fundamental role in integrating language, identity, culture and community and, in turn, enabling a sense of belonging to the Francophone community, then how do teachers render this immeasurable task possible? How do youth "integrate into and participate in the well-being of their community, society and the world" (Alberta Learning, 2001, p. 11)? I find this difficult, on a personal level, to accept this grave responsibility because my journey as a bilingual Francophone is unceasing and questionable: its future is seen through the eyes of a conflicting past and present. How is it that I came to reject my French Canadian heritage only to embrace it, sometimes beautifully, sometimes painfully, fifteen or so years later? How is it that I can't imagine myself other than a Francophone educator when I am not always accepted by the Francophone community I am drawn to serve? How and when do my own lived and imagined constructions of 'national' Francophone and Canadian identities conflict with notions of multiple identities mandated in various curriculum and policy documents? Above all, how and when will I belong?

iii) Remembering to belong

I forget failing a Grade 5 *littérature* test. My mom reminds me that I cried for several days.

There is little focus on science or English or phys. ed. at École Saint-Paul. My father deems these subjects very important. I sometimes forget the importance he places on English (and science and phys. ed.; he is a retired math teacher, but still coaches basketball after 44 years). Now, as I can more fully understand the workings of assimilation, people "hung up on English" bug me. For instance, parents don't necessarily understand that their children can be, what I call, 'assimilated lovingly.' Particular emphasis is placed on everything French (and Catholic) at École Saint-Paul: *littérature, grammaire, orthographe, catéchèse*, and more *littérature, grammaire, orthographe, catéchèse*. Perhaps this is part of the reason why my father is concerned about the traditional (French Canadian) pedagogical practices of my elementary school.

The same concern goes for pedagogical practices in the Great White North. My niece spent a school year with my sister in Québec – Arctic Québec. Prior to their departure, there was much musing about her schooling and the emphasis on Inuktitut, Inuit culture and Inuit teachings (despite the fact that the school is Francophone). In such instances, people are reminded that Québec has strong, vibrant Inuit communities. With my sister teaching on the east coast of Ungava Bay, people are reminded that Francophones come from outside Québec, too. My siblings and I live this 'forgetfulness' almost daily. Some days it is truly annoying…having to justify your existence.

As a student at Saint-Paul in the '70s and early '80s, I am not annoyed. My closest girlfriends are all French-speaking and, together, we enjoy counting down the 13 murders in *Friday the 13th* videos.

As a student at Saint-Paul, I do not recall learning about Pierre Trudeau's fight for the recognition of rights for Francophones outside Québec. I know about Pierre Trudeau; my grandmothers *love* him! Mémère Brazeau even takes a picture of him on TV; the photo doesn't turn out, but she'll proudly tell you it is of Pierre Elliot Trudeau. I share this story with my own students. They think it silly, of course – who takes a picture of someone on TV? But that isn't the point, is it? When people do not want to forget, they seek to capture the image, the sensation, the moment. I would like for my students not to forget the implications of Section 23 of the Charter – however annoying it might be for them to justify their own existence, or that of their teacher.

As their English teacher, I tell them this story: I learn in 1983 that it is not proper for little French Canadians attending Saint-Paul to wave at Queen Elizabeth II when she parades the streets of New Sudbury. Unlike other schools, it is a full school day for us committed French-speaking folk – science, English, phys. ed. or not. Perhaps time is better spent on *littérature française*.

Novak (1978) stresses the importance of recalling life experiences to develop self-awareness that is both conscious and critical. By recalling and reflecting upon my learning and teaching experiences, I am creating my own story. In Novak's (1978, p. 48) words, "The search for self takes place in large part through memory." But in making my own story conscious to my self, the more I look back upon various experiences of my life, the more I discover different selves and different others. I remain humbled and perplexed before a world full of contradictions and ambiguities. If I consider myself such a committed bilingual Francophone, then why was I so proud to attend an English high school only to feel ashamed a few years later? Why is it that I feel the need to organize two separate birthday parties, one in English and one in French, to appease my English-speaking friends? Why do I continue to spend so much time and energy scouting and reading bestselling English-Canadian novels and then feeling guilt when my knowledge of French-Canadian publications is lagging? Hoffman (1989), and others writing about bilingual and bicultural existence (e.g. Khatibi, 1992; Rodriguez, 1982), attend more carefully to questions of cultural memory than of national history.

In her evocative autobiography, *Lost in Translation*, Eva Hoffman tells a story of transition between a new continent, America, and the Old World of Cracow, Poland, and the profound sense of loss and tension between competing languages, cultures, histories and memories. At first glance, the subtitle of her book, *A Life in A New Language*, seems to refer to language in the singular. However, upon close reading, Hoffman (1989) discusses not only her early failures of communication in Canada and the United States, but also her constant struggle to re-invent her self in numerous languages in order to reconcile her two identities. The expression "lost in translation" encompasses more than second language learning and acquisition; it embodies a myriad of subject positions vis-à-vis her shifting identity, first as a stranger to herself in a blurring of two worlds, then as an American with a Polish childhood.

Like Hoffman, Richard Rodriguez (1982) ultimately embraces American culture. In his autobiography, *Hunger of Memory*, he shares a lonely journey of a Mexican-American who searches his Spanish-speaking world as a child only to become a fully assimilated American adult. Both authors offer thoughtful anecdotes and philosophical insights illustrating the ambiguity and complexity of interpreting the range of emotions felt vis-à-vis dislocation, loss and exile. For Hoffman (1989), losing a sense of place and belonging so dear to her, so crucial to her memory, so fundamental to her identity becomes disabling: " I fell out of the net of meaning into the weightlessness of chaos" (p. 151). For Rodriguez, when he learns English in school and as it takes the place of Spanish, both figuratively and literally, he loses a sense of intimacy in the home. Losing a language, in particular one's mother tongue, represents a profound sense of loss vis-à-vis his self:

> After English became my primary language, I no longer knew what words to use in addressing my parents. The old Spanish words (those tender accents of sound) I had used earlier – *mamá* and *papá* – I couldn't use anymore. They would have been too painful reminders of how much had changed in my life (Rodriguez, 1982, pp. 23-24).

Still, both Hoffman and Rodriguez are compelled to embrace the voice of melancholy while problematizing cultural nostalgia. They conquer the English language, to be sure, but it also conquers them. "Linguistic dispossession," Hoffman (1989, p. 124) explains, "is close to the dispossession of one's self." No matter how successful the adaptation to mainstream culture and the assimilation to a new language (both verbal and body), a deep sense of loss continues to be evoked throughout their respective autobiographies. Aware of the assymetry of cross-cultural relations, Hoffman (1989, p. 209) questions the never-ending juggling act between belonging and assimilation, difference and acceptance: "But how does one bend toward another culture without falling over, how does one strike an elastic balance between rigidity and self-effacement?"

And it is, indeed, these very assymetries, contradictions and ambiguities that I seek to understand. Hélène Cixous reminds me that my narrative exploration is telling one story in the place of another (Fitzgerald, 1999). Interestingly, Cixous' work on remembering memory and using one's own life as a site of critical inquiry has been seen as "unconventional" writing. Although memory plays an important function in Cixous' text, she does not, explains Mireille Calle-Bruber, write of memory: "*C'est une manière de découvrir ce qu'il y a d'étrange en soi-même. C'est ça la mémoire. Ça serait justement ce que l'on a oublié et ce que l'on retrouve au fil de la plume, au fil d'une* *trajectoire dans les mots. C'est les mots qui parlent de la mémoire*" (Fitzgerald, 1999). Although Cixous embraces memory, and places of memory in particular, she does emphasize the importance of recounting memories that are at once personal and collective. Autobiography must make one's experiences accessible to be useful (Fitzgerald, 1999). For me, the works of Hoffman (1989) and Rodriguez (1982) speak from wider personal experience. Although they share memories of their respective bilingual existence, they also tell stories of life, love, loss, mystery, joy and sorrow. My task, then, will be to recount memories not only because remembering is a matter of honour (Hoffman, 1989), but also because it is a matter of responsibility (King, 2003).

iv) Remembering to live into the future

I remember the smell of my windowless classroom. "That's Grade 7 smell," I tell my students, when they ask about the classroom stench. Spring has sprung and hormones are surfacing in new ways. The responses from my three Grade 7 classes don't change: "it's hot in here," "it smells in here – who farted," or "it smells like peaches or pears" (hidden air freshener), and the incessant, "Madame, can we go outside," followed by Grade 7 whining.

In this smelly, hot and cramped classroom, we review a brief grammar lesson. Although my students had picked up on my penchant for grammar and Latin earlier in the school year, they loathe grammar. Like I have done so often, I resort to French grammar. In French, adverbs tend to have the same ending: e.g. *–ment*, as in *évidemment* (evidently), *sûrement* (surely). There are, of course, exceptions: e.g. *souvent* (often), *vite* (fast). When I ask the class to come up with words ending in –ly that are *not* adverbs (e.g. ugly), all of my 100 or so bored students stare up at me blankly. Except for Tricia. She boisterously blurts out "butterfly."

The word "butterfly" is commonly known as a noun, but it is also a verb. Butterflies are nouns in that they are things – flying insects with colourful, symmetrical wings, erect when they are at rest. Butterflies are also transitory or seasonal things, disappearing with the falling autumn leaves only to return in the warm spring. Butterfly is a verb in that junior high students, like Tricia, are often caught loitering, butterflying about the corridors during class time in an effort to avoid either work or punishment.

But what's a butterfly, really? As a caterpillar, the butterfly in larval form is certainly not beautiful. This is how teachers who've worked with Tricia sometimes see her. She is a student who farts around, who's sometimes hyper and easily distracted, who takes little care in the presentation of her work. Although sly Tricia has all-too-often reminded me how I was the only teacher who ever said "shit" in class, she has also taught me to pay close attention. To language, to assumptions, to words like "butterfly."

Unlike responsible teachers, I have never read Tricia's file in the locked cabinet and under the watchful eye of a secretary or two. I already know that the butterfly and the caterpillar are one in the same. I have heard the rumors, but I have also experienced a bright classroom participant whose creativity is ignored. She has been labelled an ugly insect with attitude for antennae and delinquency for wings. It is no wonder that her flimsy wings cannot extend to their full potential when she is berated for her pesty ways.

When I asked Tricia how she sees herself, once again she caught me off guard. The vast majority of my students have identified themselves as Francophones, Franco-Albertans, or Francophone Canadians. "*Québec-inese*" (her spelling), she replied without hesitation. "What do you mean," I asked humbly. As I was well aware, Tricia's mother is from Québec; her father, from China. This can explain her petite frame and the black sheen to her beautiful hair that cascades down her back. Tricia, the *Québec-inese* girl, born and raised in Edmonton, not only broke the bicultural and bilingual binary of Francophone-Anglophone and taught me to pay close attention to language, but she has also encouraged me to continue to seek alternative ways of (re)imagining what it means to be a student and a teacher in a Francophone school in Alberta. After all, butterflies that bear upon their fragile wings such hues of black, red (China), and blue (Québec) flutter around modernist meanings of a traditional francophonie. This *Québec-inese* caterpillar has cleverly captivated the teacher-researcher's attention.

The above four stories place me on the continuum of a changing francophonie, from a student attending a predominantly white, Catholic and traditional French Canadian school in a working class mining town to a teacher in a globalized Francophone school environment in a strong middle class urban centre. The shift in discourse, though, has yet to be embraced by students, teachers and parents alike. The foundations of Francophone education remain *avant tout* about the affirmation of students' identification with and sense of belonging to the French language and Francophone culture and community (Alberta Learning, 2001). If the pillars of Francophone school are language, identity, culture and community integration, then how is the complexity of multiple discourses in terms of language, identity, culture and community acknowledged in Francophone school communities? Given the accelerating diversity in the Francophone context in Alberta, it is important to remember the past and present of the Canadian and Albertan francophonies through the eyes of the future. This translates into seeking a deeper understanding of the diversity within the "Franco-Albertan" experience.

Students like Tricia propell me to live into the future – the future of Canada, the future of the Canadian francophonie, the future of the Francophone school community. Writers like Hoffman (1989) and Rodriguez (1982) also invite me to make peace with the past and the present. In retelling stories of transition and translation, they painfully look back on the questions of language and culture that erupted in and around them. Moreover, they thoughtfully look forward to the multiple senses of reality, theirs and others, that continue to shape their senses of self. Hence, I am provoked by new ways of thinking about bilingual existence, the complex process of negotiation, and the ongoing search for voice.

Significance of the study

My research into Grade 7 students' and a teacher-researcher's experiences and interpretations of varied Francophone identities promises to make an important and timely contribution to the fields of curriculum studies, social studies and Francophone education.

Educational policy and social studies curricula currently reflect the multicultural and bilingual nature of Canada. Modified curriculum, approved in Alberta in 2005, largely reflects global perspectives and representations of citizenship and identity. A strengthening of diversity, both in terms of its definitions and its place in Canadian society, are increasingly being represented in programs of study across Canada. Even though education in Canada is administered provincially, educators face similar concerns, trends and structures. Given the increasing diversity in Francophone communities across Canada, it is little wonder that Francophone educators are questioning the relevance of the overall curriculum. In Canada, educational researchers suggest that new directions be taken because there is an absence of representation of cultural diversity within Francophone communities, and of the interconnectedness of French-speaking peoples in Canada and worldwide (Alberta Learning, 2001; FCFA, 2001; Heller, 1999; Lafontant, 2002; Tétu, 1992). In the face of accelerating diversity, educators are called to create new pedagogies and curricula that promote social cohesion, individual and collective identity, a sense of belonging, and global citizenship (Alberta Education, 2005; Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt, 2002b; Durrigan Santora, 2001; Merryfield & Subedi, 2001; Richardson, 2002; Sears, 1997; Willinsky, 1998).

Given the increasing diversity in Francophone communities in Alberta, it is critical for the Francophone educational milieu to reflect and value the diverse nature of lived Francophone experiences. The distinct mission of Francophone schools outside Québec is to enable official language minority students to develop a Francophone identity and a sense of belonging to the Francophone community. If the Francophone school plays a fundamental role in integrating language, identity, culture and community, then what happens when the face of the francophonie itself changes? By emphasizing the importance of diversity and respect for differences, my research study is an attempt to highlight ways in which issues of Canadian and Francophone identities can be approached to recognize our differences as well as some sense of Canada and the francophonie we are (becoming) familiar with.

As a Francophone teacher-researcher in a minority setting, I am particularly drawn to explore how Grade 7 students perceive and construct the francophonie and their Francophone identity as lived in Alberta. This qualitative study, conducted during the 2005-2006 school year, is guided by the following research questions:

- What are the lived Francophone experiences of Grade 7 students in Alberta?
- What insights do student stories of lived Francophone experiences in Alberta offer about the francophonie, about curriculum, about accelerating pluralism?

Specifically, I consider how stories of history, memory, language and geography – as they relate to the French language and Francophone culture and identity – explore the lived experience of Francophones in Alberta, especially during an era of increasing pluralism. Paying attention to students' lived experiences and to my own, as well as to the complex constructions of identity can help educators explore the problems and possibilities of a plural francophonie in Alberta and Canada.

In the following section, Part Two, I explore the role that language and identity play in (re)defining and (re)imagining Canada and the Canadian francophonie. Using poststructuralist theory, I examine the porous borders of identity. I attempt to problematize (assumed) grand narratives of history and identity. Asking various questions about language and identity is crucial: questions about how we know who we are, about how our identities are interpellated, and about how discursive practices participate in the ontological process. If poststructuralism is to contribute to the conceptual framework of my research project, then such multilevel explorations will provide the platform from which the interrelationships of history, memory, language, culture and geography can be discussed subjectively, critically and thoughtfully.

CHAPTER 2

LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

Two or three things I know for sure, and one of them is just
this—if we cannot name our own we are cut off at the root,
our hold on our lives as fragile as seed in a wind.
– Dorothy Allison (1996, p. 12)

We are challenged to bring each text alive in our
experience, to allow it to radiate through consciousness and
open up new perspectives on the lived world.
– Michelle Fine (1994, p. 457)

We live on only the smallest margins of our possibilities
of experience.
– Michael Novak (1978, p. 16)

There is no *way out*, the fact remains that we are *foreigners*
on the inside—but there is no outside. Thus we must constantly
'run up against the limits' of ordinary language.
– Michel de Certeau (1988, pp. 13-14)

1. Une arrière-grand-mère quitte Macamic en Abitibi pour s'établir à Cochrane en Ontario, à la recherche d'une vie meilleure. Mère de neuf enfants, elle fait beaucoup de couture. Et pour cinq cents, elle peut coudre une belle blouse très élaborée, et ce, sans patron. Elle est une femme fière.

2. Une grand-mère veut rentrer chez elle. Elle est pleine d'esprit mais souffre d'amnésie. Quand elle reçoit de la visite au Manoir Champlain ou à l'Hôpital Monfort dans la région d'Ottawa, elle fouille dans sa mémoire et répond qu'elle s'en va à Sudbury. C'est dans le bassin géologique qu'est la ville du Big Nickel qu'elle coud des vêtements pour ses cinq enfants (souvent avec de vieux morceaux ou des retails de tissu). Femme âgée de 92 ans, elle raconte avec humour des histoires de son enfance et de ses premières 40 ans dans le nord ontarien. Elle est une femme fière.

3. Une mère veut rentrer chez elle. En visite à Ottawa, elle ressent un rapprochement particulier à sa mère. Elle a conservé toute sa vie le souvenir d'apprendre à coudre de sa mère. Comme son enfant nouveau-né qui a soif du lait qui la nourrit, elle a soif de la créativité et de la couture. Elle coud tous ses vêtements de maternité, maintenant devenus « vintage ». Davantage créative à l'âge adulte, elle fait de la courtepointe et de la broderie à la machine avec un regroupement de femmes canadiennes françaises. Elle est une femme fière.

4. Une fille veut rentrer chez elle. Elle a beaucoup voyagé et déménagé. Certes, elle en garde de bons souvenirs : étudier à Jonquière et ensuite à Moncton (à deux reprises), passant par Toronto puis par Edmonton. Avant son départ en Acadie, sa mère lui apprend à coudre une robe d'été. Quinze ans plus tard, elle lui rend visite en Alberta et, ensemble, elles cousent des rideaux pour la nouvelle demeure. Elle revoit la robe d'été et pense ré-utiliser le beau coton dans une courtepointe de famille. La fille rend sa (grand-)mère fière.

5. Une petite fille veut rentrer chez grand-maman. Elle veut coudre une autre belle petite sacoche. Elle avait d'abord cousu un cadeau de fin d'année pour son enseignante francophone. Heureuse devant son oeuvre, elle danse, elle chante. Dès l'âge de 3 ans, elle s'identifie à la communauté francophone et artistique. Elle a maintenant sa propre machine à coudre et c'est à elle de l'apprivoiser. Tout comme son tambour en peau de chevreuil. La fille rend sa (grand-)mère fière.

As I read and reread these five biographical and autobiographical descriptions, I am reminded of a family where lines of language, culture and identity are not as blurred. Over five generations, the French language and French-Canadian culture, along with memories of an unforgiving landscape in northern Québec, and memories of solace, sisterhood and survival are interwoven; places, people and pasts are interlaced through the same language, culture and religion. Unlike the Thompson family, the colours of the Brazeau/Bergeron clan come together quite naturally: embodied memories weave (*tisser de mémoire*) themselves from woman to child, as each learns to sew the seeds of a mother tongue from Macamic and reep the rewards of Francophone children living and existing outside of Québec. French-speaking filaments fasten together sheets of a French Canadian family book by passing threads, sometimes taut, to attach to the larger pages of a collective memory and plural francophonie. Indeed, my attachment, or *attachement*, is expressed along cultural, historical, geographic and linguistic lines: *je me suis attachée à rechercher l'identité des francophones en situation minoritaire*. My profound interest in the stories of Francophone peoples outside of Québec summons me to better understand the interrelationships of history, memory, language, culture and geography in the Franco-Albertan context, where I currently live and exist.

In seeking a deeper understanding of the plurality and complexity of narratives within the Franco-Albertan experience, I explore in particular the interrelations of language and identity from a poststructural perspective. Poststructuralism teaches us that identity is always fluid and shifting, that language produces meaning and one's sense of self, and that narratives of identity are conflicting and continuous (Belsey, 2002, p. 7; Kerby, 1991, pp. 4-6; Richardson, 2001, p. 36). But what is 'poststructuralism' exactly?

How does one recognize it, let alone define it? In this next section, I will attempt to outline the main features of poststructuralism, illustrate its relationship to structuralism and postmodernism, and critically reflect upon its assumptions. I will then discuss why poststructuralism matters for studies of identity. Finally, I will highlight poststructuralism's relevance and significance to the study of Francophone identity in a linguistic minority setting such as Alberta.

Revisiting the origins of poststructuralism

The theories of various thinkers have contributed to understanding education in general and the nature of its institutions in particular. They represent various ways of approaching texts and practices in education, often from very different perspectives. Poststructural thinkers are no different. However, their critical stance on conceptions of 'truth' and 'reality' illustrates a body of theory that has developed in a postmodern world. And poststructuralism becomes the group of theories around questions of language, culture and identity that helps us make sense of the postmodern world and our place in it.

Nietzsche's & Heidegger's philosophies are often seen as precursors to the poststructuralist movement (Peters & Burbules, 2004). The rediscovery and interpretation of Nietzsche's work allowed Heidegger to examine works on thinking and learning in general and concepts of truth and knowledge in particular (p. 2). Nietzsche's writings addressed the importance of critiquing concepts like 'truth' by examining multiple concepts in relation (e.g. truth, power, desire, knowledge) and allowing for multiple interpretations of such interrelated ideas (p. 18). For Heidegger, external conditions such as historical, social and cultural structures played an important role in forming one's sense of self; moreover, one's historical and cultural location also influenced one's "being-in-the-world" (p. 22). Furthermore, in his *Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger described language as "the house of being" (Kerby, 1991, p. 2). Given the importance placed on language and interpretation in poststructuralism (e.g. Belsey, 2002), it is not surprising that the theoretical developments of both Nietzsche and Heidegger proved to be 'highly significant' for the emergence of poststructuralism. According to Peters & Burbules (2004), "Nietzsche's work provided a new way to theorize and conceive of the discursive operation of power and desire in the constitution and self-overcoming of human subjects" (p. 24). In other words, Nietzsche and Heidegger, in emphasizing "the partiality of our knowledge of the world," influenced contemporary understandings of the nature and function of language, context, and self (Kerby, 1991, p. 9).

Perhaps of greater significance is that future thinkers involved in the poststructural movement would be influenced by Nietzsche and Heidegger, namely Foucault and Derrida. Both would challenge assumptions about notions of universal structures and scientific modes of knowledge and emphasize notions of difference and decentering. Foucault and Derrida both understood language as discourse, as a function to produce and maintain systems of knowledge. The way we come to know the world, then, requires a better understanding of the classification of knowledge (Foucault) and of the embedded hierarchy of notions (Derrida) in the West. For example, with his explicit critique of pedagogical institutions and of the 'disciplinary' model of the school (both key to his overall critique of the human sciences), Foucault described how the development of knowledge was intertwined with power and systemized control:

"Ultimately, Foucault would say that in such techniques [of surveillance] we learn to administer to ourselves in pursuit of the goal of reproducing knowledge and reproducing ourselves as knowers" (Peters & Burbules, 2004, p. 3). Put another way, Foucault showed that various institutions put forth particular discourses of knowledge, power and order that ultimately shape our sense of 'reality.' While Foucault examined the historical construction of knowledge, Derrida also looked for the history in constructed meanings. Given the West's dependence on binary oppositions, Derrida sought to show how a plurality of meaning is at work in language, that is, how the implied order between two opposing ideas (e.g. man/woman) is not so rigid and transparent. In summary, Foucault and Derrida, confronted with the complexities of a dis-orderly poststructuralist world, questioned everyday assumptions about the self, language and meaning.

Lyotard also stressed the notion of difference and critiqued the totalizing claims of truth, reason, stability, universality, and so on. If poststructuralist critics such as Foucault and Derrida see 'reality' as being more diverse, situational and contingent, then it is in part because we live in a postmodern world. Lyotard (1984), in *The Postmodern Condition*, describes the role and status of knowledge and education but, more importantly, argues that totality and order underpinning modern societies are maintained through the means of 'master narratives.' Postmodernism, then, is the critique of grand narratives, the universalist stories that a culture tells itself about its belief systems and everyday practices. Simply put, Lyotard (1984) defines 'postmodern' as "incredulity toward metanarratives" (p. xxiv). While the postmodern rejects metanarratives, it also favours *petits récits*, the 'little narratives' or stories that explain small-scale practices, local events or small local groups and that "give rise to institutions in patches – local determinism" (p. xxiv). Postmodern knowledge, in other words, embraces a multitude of small narratives in a heterogeneous society, "refin[ing] our sensitivity to differences and reinforc[ing] our ability to tolerate the incommensurable" (p. xxv). Richardson (2001) emphasizes the indeterminacy of postmodernism and what it proposes for situated knowledge: "What postmodernism does is to recognize the situational limitations of the knower. It recognizes that you have partial, local, temporal knowledge – and that is enough" (p. 35). While the terms postmodernism and poststructuralism are distinct, it is important to note that the emphasis on difference in Derrida and Foucault as well as the mutual rejection of totalizing explanations of 'reality' render our understandings of the world multiple, diverse, situated, contingent and constructed – and needing no more justification than that. Poststructuralism, then, can be seen as a part of postmodernism.

Based on the theoretical contributions of primarily French thinkers but also German philosophers, the origins of poststructuralism as an intellectual movement addressed questions of the role and status of educators (Nietzsche), the model of educational and social institutions (Heidegger, Derrida, and Foucault), and the normalization and commodication of knowledge (Foucault and Lyotard). From this brief survey of the antecedents to poststructuralism, one can conclude that precursors and thinkers belonging to this intellectual movement illustrated philosophical and political commitments to a critique of dominant institutions (including, but not limited to, pedagogical institutions) and of ways of knowing and being (especially as they related to language, meaning, and power). If questions of epistemology and ontology were examined more closely and more critically, then poststructuralism offered not simply a "philosophical attack" upon but also a "philosophical corrective" to the traditionally confident scientific accounts of social inquiry (Peters & Burbules, 2004, p. 4). Thus, poststructuralism should be seen as a specific philosophical response against the scientific pretentions of structuralism (p. 7).

Defining structuralism and poststructuralism

The preliminary points discussed above call for a closer look at the relationship between structuralism and poststructuralism. By the early 1970s a new intellectual movement arose, primarily in France, through the influential works of Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), Michel Foucault (1926-1984), Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998) and Roland Barthes (1915-1980), to name a few (men). Although these French scholars represented a group with divergent views, they also reflected a body of work that sought to transform ideas of self, knowledge, meaning, and power. Their collective work put into question the ways permanent structures can be objectively studied, that is, how structuralists theorize the human condition. Poststructuralism, then, cannot be understood without structuralism.

a) Structuralism

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), the Swiss linguist and founder of structuralism, used linguistics to show how definite underlying structures can explain human existence. According to Saussure, language entails a universal structure with a constructed system of rules. One key Saussurean principle is that the relation of the linguistic signifier (e.g. d/o/g) to the signified concept (e.g. 'dog') is completely arbitrary. This has to be for two main reasons: one, different languages have different signifiers for the same ideas (e.g. chien, cane, Hund); and, two, meaning resides solely in the sign.

Saussure divided the sign into two parts to better illustrate that words or images mean something when human beings learn that linguistic or visual signifiers are not always interchangeable (thus, making translation difficult). Distinguishing between tu and vous has to be learned because the different meanings have social (and grammatical) implications in French. Put another way, meaning in language results in difference and relationship (Belsey, 2002). By marking a difference between *tu* and *vous*, there is a distinct difference in relationship. Although the *vous* in more widely used in France than in Canada, as a child I learned the difference between *tu* and *vous* in various educational and social settings and internalized the various meanings from a young age. But what makes meaning possible is structure; after all, Saussure was primarily interested in language as a functional system ("*langue*"), rather than as a collection of individual utterances ("*parole*").

Saussure's singular approach to language and texts seduced many, and by the 1960s "structuralism was everywhere" (Belsey, 2002, p. 42). Binary oppositions such as universal/particular, science/literature, nature/culture abound, and human beings become the effect of such structures. Structuralism, in Belsey's (2002) words, "promised a key to all human practices; it offered mastery of the single principle that would hold together the apparently disparate features of all cultures" (p. 42). Put another way, Saussure's workings of language were highly influential in treating difference as superficial, human beings as the effect of structures, and meaning as learned (rather than produced). Structuralists, then, were preoccupied with the method, the way of approaching language and texts, as inspired by the structural linguistics of Saussure. For example, they studied patterns and systems that shaped language and texts because structures were deemed universal and, therefore, timeless. The structure of language, ultimately, produced 'reality.'

Barthes, usually labelled a structuralist (for his work on the common structure of narratives), put into question Saussure's idea that codes are finite. Previously, Barthes' views were in line with Saussure's theory of the sign as a basis for analyzing and understanding human society. In his influential work S/Z (1970), however, Barthes analyzes five narrative codes at work in Balzac's short story 'Sarrasine,' and re-considers the assumption of 'deep structures' and 'finite codes.' In fact, he finds the single determining structure to narrative, and his narrative analysis becomes "perhaps the most explicit textual moment of poststructuralism" (Belsey, 2002, p. 43). He opens S/Z with a renunciation of the structuralist project and, by the end of his analysis, espouses the grand claims of structuralism no longer appear to be authoritative, but "absurd" (p. 43). As Culler (2002) points out, "Barthes insists that instead of treating the work [S/Z] as the manifestation of an underling system he will explore its difference from itself, its unmasterable evasiveness, and the way it outplays the codes on which it seems to be based" (p. 74). Barthes, in decentering Saussure's structures and revealing a much more complex interpretation of Balzac's work, allows for multiple possible meanings of text, which are neither universal nor eternal (Belsey, 2002, p. 44). Given poststructuralist thinkers' obsession with difference and their disbelief of totalizing grand narratives, Barthes allies himself to the poststructural movement. While structuralism and poststructuralism are both ways of analyzing and interpreting language, text and meaning, it is important to distinguish between the two.

b) Poststructuralism

Poststructuralism can be broadly defined as a theory of language and text that helps us make sense of the postmodern world. Put another way, "Poststructuralism names a theory, or a group of theories, concerning the relationship between human beings, the world, and the practice of making and reproducing meanings" (Belsey, 2002, p. 5). It appears in a variety of disciplines, including art, literature, psychology, sociology, and education. As noted above, this intellectual movement grew during the 1960s as a response to structuralism. Indeed, it is generally referred to as a critique of structuralism. Poststructural thought is not simply a rejection of structuralism; rather, it is an exploration of new approaches to the construction of meaning. It is an investigation of how meaning is made through the power of discourse and language. But what is 'language,' its nature and function?

Language is one of the defining characteristics of poststructuralism. Belsey (2002), Kerby (1991) and Richardson (2001) attempt to define 'language' in poststructural ways and illustrate the centrality of language in the construction of meaning. From a poststructuralist viewpoint, language organizes human experience. Poststructuralists argue that we know the world through language and that language cannot accurately and fully reveal our perceptions and understanding of the world (Belsey, 2002, p. 10). According to Kerby (1991), language is the "dominant characteristic" of our lives as it describes our existence within a speech community (language as spoken and written) but, more importantly, as it delves into the recursive process of self-understanding and sense-making (p. 11). In his words, "language is viewed not simply as a tool for communicating or mirroring back what we otherwise discover in our reality but is itself an important formative part of that reality, part of its very texture" (p. 2). As a result, meaning can never be fixed; rather, it is produced – and language becomes central in the making of meaning. Simply put, language is "the centrepiece" of poststructuralism (Richardson, 2001, p. 36). For Belsey (2002), poststructuralism is concerned with "what goes on in language" and what we can claim to know about the world in which we live with any certainty (p. 71). Put another way, poststructuralists doubt the assertion of truth claims by acknowledging that there is no single, authoritative truth in a postmodern world (Lyotard, 1984). Because "truths (or otherwise) are told in language," language differs from one culture to another, and language mediates our sense of 'reality,' meaning, therefore, changes all the time (Belsey, 2002, pp. 70-71). As a result, our linguistically constructed world is continually in flux and meaning is never fixed.

Along with language, discourses are also a defining feature of poststructuralism. According to Foucault (1988), we are inventions of discourses. We emerge out of the practices, rituals and techniques, and our ways of knowing are greatly influenced by discourses or discursive practices. Foucault, in his attempt to analyze 'discursive practices' of knowledge, emphasized how such practices must be understood in their social, political and historical contexts. As Britzman (2003) explains, discursive boundaries textualize and (re)invent our identities:

> Every discourse constitutes, even as it mobilizes and shuts out, imaginary communities, identity investments, and discursive practices. Discourses authorize what can and cannot be said; they produce relations of power and communities of consent and dissent, and thus discursive boundaries are always being redrawn around what constitutes the desirable and the undesirable and around what it is that makes possible particular structures of intelligibility and unintelligibility (pp. 251-252).

For example, students in a Francophone school in Alberta are, by virtue of their *being* in a Francophone school (rather than a French Immersion or English school), engaged in a form of resistance against discourses of 'English Canada' and dominant practices of being Canadian and Albertan. I borrow this idea of "resisting bodies" from Wear (1997) who describes rigid constructs of normative, controlled and medicalized (male) bodies and behaviours in medical school and the importance of female medical students resisting such patriarchal practices (p. 30). Women's resistance in controlled environments, like Alberta Francophones' resistance in a social, political and economic milieu controlled by Anglophones, is "an act of courage" because women, like Francophones in a linguistic minority setting, "resist by taking up space" (Wear, 1997, p. 30). Francophones in Alberta, who move back and forth between (opposing and sometimes competing) social, cultural and linguistic worlds, disrupt traditional politics and normative ways of being Albertan (and Western Canadian) as they offer different perspectives to Alberta history, places, languages, cultures, and so on.

Filax (2004), in her analysis of Alberta as a province of the 'severely normal,' illustrates how experience becomes contextualized. More specifically, she explains how rigidly controlled the Alberta identity and environment are and how homophobia has been 'produced' in a 'severely normal' province that creates (heterosexist) identities. In her words, "The struggle over human rights protections for lesbians and gays...[is] a struggle over what constitutes a proper, normal Alberta identity and who rightfully belongs within the Alberta community/mosaic" (p. 88). In her study of issues and rights talk, Filax (2004) pays particular attention to the language used in the *Alberta Report*, a weekly

Alberta magazine widely distributed throughout the province and widely supported within the elected provincial government (p. 88). Overall, Filax (2004) supports Foucault's idea of how our ways of knowing and being (Albertan) are influenced by power-full discursive practices, especially ones that advocate a "narrow sense of identity as to who [is] a proper, normal Albertan in Western Canada" (p. 116).

Foucault also claims that power is linked to discourse. Foucault is concerned with the exercise of power because discursive practices involve relations of power *and* resistance. On the one hand, norms are culturally produced and power is "creative, producing ways of being and ideals to aspire to" (Belsey, 2002, p. 54). For example, Francophone schools in Alberta, the provincially-mandated curriculum and the teachers who 'implement' it, all 'tell' students how to be Francophone, how to speak French (and English), and how to 'show' their Francophone identity in local, provincial, national and international contexts (e.g. Alberta Learning, 2001, 2003). On the other hand, Foucault insists that power does not exist without the possibility of resistance and that power is, indeed, a relation of struggle (Belsey, 2002, p. 55). In Alberta, for example, Francophone students, teachers and parents struggle against a predominantly Anglophone milieu where a discourse of the 'severely normal' is widespread and does not include Francophones as 'normal' Albertans.[9]

---

[9] A quick glance at *Alberta Report* (AR) articles published between 1993-1999 shows that Franco-Albertans, the French language and French-language schooling do not 'rightfully' belong in Alberta. For example, graduates of French immersion programs are not taught "proper French" (AR, March 27, 1995) and are deemed to "suffer psychological problems" (AR, June 12, 1995), while Franco-Calgarians are characterized for their "squabbling" and "infighting" over the "fancy Francophone centre" (AR, May 22, 1995). In all instances, the *Alberta Report* promotes a discourse of what constitutes a 'normal' Alberta identity and citizenry by representing Francophone and Francophile Albertans as an extreme group of forceful outsiders of questionable behaviour, language and psychology.

While identities are being produced within such a provincial discourse (read narrow-minded), there are also discourses of culture, language and religion that operate within the pan-Canadian and Franco-Albertan communities at large. On a national level, Francophone identity is framed by constitutional and historical discourses of official bilingualism (1969) and the Charter of Rights (1982) – legislation that continues to guarantee (historical) rights to Catholic and Francophone education across Canada. On a provincial level, 'true' Franco-Albertan identity is represented by French-speaking white, Catholic French Canadians with historical roots in Alberta. One Alberta educator warns of a vision of 'exclusion' if local Francophones in Alberta are not, or choose not, to be practising Catholics. As Dubé (2002) bluntly puts it: "Une telle politique de l'ambivalence et de la démission n'est-elle pas le résultat d'une vision archaïque, désuète et dépassée de la francophonie, une vision qui ponctue encore de nombreux discours émanant de l'establishment francophone minoritaire?" (p. 90). However, it is perhaps ongoing fluency that is the most significant marker of this identity (e.g. Dallaire, 2004; Gérin-Lajoie, 2003; Léger, 2001; Levasseur-Ouimet, 1991). And the Francophone school, also a function of discourse, heeds the call to 'save' the constituents of Francophone minority communities from cultural and linguistic assimilation (e.g. Behiels, 2004). In other words, (Francophone) identities are produced by multiple discursive practices that must be understood in their social, historical and political contexts and in relation to the closely bound concepts of power and resistance. Indeed, Richardson (2001) reminds us that the prevailing discourses available to us to make sense of who we are in relation to others and the world influence our sense of selves. Put another way, "For poststructuralists, representation is always in crisis, knowledge is constitutive of power, and agency is the constitutive effect, and not the originator, of situated practices and histories" (Britzman, 2003, pp. 245-256).

Like Foucault, Derrida is also concerned with the power of discourse and language. As resistance is the difference which gives meaning to power, so too is poststructuralism: in poststructural thought, difference is always emphasized over unity (Belsey, 2002, p. 56). And Derrida looks at questions of language and identity differently. Derrida argues that the history of Western thought is based on binary oppositions (e.g. man/woman, white/black, English/French, normal/abnormal, and so on). Such binaries represent not only structuralist categories, but they also illustrate how meaning is shaped by hierarchical oppositional thinking (Belsey, 2002, p. 75). In the Canadian context, for example, the 'loaded' Anglophone/Francophone binary is defined hierarchically because Anglophone, the first term, is privileged over the second term, Francophone; thus, Anglophone/Francophone are not equal opposites. Moreover, "the meaning of each [opposite] depends on the trace of the other that inhabits its definition" (p. 75), illustrating how Anglophone *and* Francophone have meaning only in reference to the other. As a result, Derrida invites us to contest the privilege, not to reverse the hierarchy, but rather to attend to the language and discourse(s) that name and differentiate Anglophones from Francophones and vice versa (Belsey, 2002, p. 77). And although binaries should be undone with an awareness of the implied linguistic hierarchies, they should never be re-interpreted with a 'truth' in mind because language is not transparent. Derrida's method of deconstruction seeks to erase the limiting slash between oppositions to dismantle the power of the binary because the meaning of who is Francophone, for example, becomes undecidable: there is no definitive answer or undeniable truths (p. 87).

As Derrida suggests, then, language is ambiguous and multiple layers of meaning are at work in language, thus meanings are always shifting and allowing for a multiplicity of interpretations, even competing ones.

From a poststructural point of view, language and discourses make and shape social reality, but they also shape one's subjectivity. And nurturing one's subjectivity becomes important in poststructural thought. Kerby (1991) states that the self is a product of language, what he calls "the implied subject of self-referring utterances" (p. 4) because self-understanding is based on storytelling or narrative constructions of one's experiences (p. 12). Richardson (1997) describes subjectivity as shifting because "we come to know, and not know, ourselves, and know ourselves again, differently" (p. 181). While we are "narratively constructed," we must also understand that our narratives are multiple, conflicting, dynamic, and "differentially available." In an educational context, contradictions can arise when teachers teach different narratives differently: "The very language we borrow to pin down identities, to situate an experience, to recognize an event, and to render intelligible the meanings of others is, as Zoe Wicomb suggests, both a linguistic right and a site of ideological struggle" (Britzman et al., 1993, p. 188). In other words, the construction and reconstruction of one's sense of self is an ongoing process that involves competing 'mininarratives' operating within implied metanarratives (Richardson, 1997, p. 180). Richardson (1997) alerts us to what poststructuralism proposes: that meaning changes with different implied narratives and that subjectivity shifts accordingly, as we attempt to make sense of events in our lives differently (pp. 180-181). As she explains both the complexity and openness of "shifting subjectivities,"

> As agents in our own construction, we choose among cultural stories, apply them to our experiences, sometimes get stuck in a particularly strong metanarrative, often operate within contradictory implied narratives, and sometimes seek stories that trangress the culturally condoned ones (p. 181).

For Richardson (1997), cultural narratives can be "prefabricated," while for Kerby (1991) the subject becomes "a result of discursive praxis" (p. 4), and for Foucault (1988) such narratives operate within differing and sometimes competing discourses. Taken together, constructions and reconstructions of the self depend on social, cultural and historical discourses, which involves recognizing the subject as always being a site of struggle (Belsey, 2002, p. 38).

Constructing and negotiating identities represent an ongoing process where meaning and self-understanding are always in flux. Belsey (2002), however, stresses the importance of using the more precise term 'subject-position' rather than 'identity' when considering how meaning emanates from language. First, 'subject' is a grammatical category where 'I' is called to recognize the meanings, norms and practices that shapes the expectations of one's culture. Second, 'I' live in a world where language is fraught with ambiguity, therefore accepting, when 'I' say that I am a Francophone teacher in Alberta, that 'I' is a certain subjection to the cultural norms behind 'Francophone,' 'teacher,' and 'Alberta.' Third, and finally, 'I' is not simply about the fixed binary oppositions of mother/daughter, Anglophone/Francophone, teacher/student, and so on. Rather, 'I' embraces plurality, a blurring of meaning(s), a revealing of multiple subject-positions. As Belsey (2002) suggests, 'subject' "allows for discontinuities and contradictions. I can adopt a range of subject-positions, and not all of them will necessarily be consistent with each other. 'Identity' implies sameness: that's what the word means. Subjects can differ – even from themselves" (p. 52).

Through the lens of poststructural theories, identity is an effect of language, discourse, and subjectivity. I have several senses of self. My narratives are numerous. On the one hand, they are ongoing and have been constantly changing over the years, while on the other, they are conflicting and in need of continuous updating. I have multiple subject-positions not only because of my languages, experiences, and education, but also because of cultural influences and social interactions. In general, my identity is not singular in focus despite my strong *attachement* to various French-speaking communities. The plurality of sense of self can indeed be conflicting and seem incoherent, but as for all recursive processes, the creation of personal identities is fluid and contextual. Thus, I am constructed and continue to unfold by representing and interpreting my sense of self in relation to others.

Reflecting on critiques of poststructuralism

Critiques of poststructuralism abound because the theories associated with it are multiple, differing and complex. Poststructuralism is used as a theoretical framework in different disciplines, namely literary theory, philosophy, sociology, cultural, feminist and postcolonial studies. It is seen as all-encompassing because a wide range of fields make the single heading of poststructuralism their theoretical home. However, poststructuralism is not at all singular. Simply put, it is not a single theory, nor a single method. It is a historical and intellectual movement, motivated initially by the work of Nietzsche and Heidegger, to critique 'truth' and 'master' narratives (of knowledge, meaning, power). With the emergence of poststructuralists theories and methods, poststructuralism has been described as inaccessible, aloof, abstract, and arduous to read (Peters & Turbules, 2004). Overall, philosophizing remains abstract because poststructuralism encompasses such a diverse body of work. Perhaps this is due, in part, to its complicated history. Nonetheless, the interest in poststructuralism between and across disciplines illustrates the scope and importance of poststructuralist theories and the persistence to uncover alternative accounts of interrelated questions of language, meaning, and self-understanding.

Poststructuralism theorizes complex concepts such as power, knowledge and meaning, all in the name of dismantling a singular 'truth.' In Britzman's (2003) words, "poststructuralist voices challenge a unitary and coherent narrative about experience" (p. 247). In doing so, poststructuralism pushes a lot of boundaries with its emphasis on blurred genres, situated researchers and research subjects, and narrative and poetic texts; thus, it continues to be met with resistance. Moreover, poststructuralism is seen to be disruptive, tentative, and even suspicious. Adopting a poststructuralist perspective in educational inquiry, for example, disrupts both researcher and subject confidence in that access to truth is not guaranteed and language, concerned with discourses, cannot capture anyone's experience or 'reality' (Britzman, 2003, pp. 247-248). For Britzman (2003), poststructuralists should engage in a "messy process of theorizing" as they embrace uncertainty and "begin to employ more suspicious discourses that exceed practices of normalization" (p. 252). Belsey (2002), too, acknowledges that poststructuralists challenge traditional accounts of our place in the world and, because they attempt to offer competing alternatives to traditional understandings of who and what we are, poststructuralism continues to be controversial (p. 6).

Finally, poststructuralist thinkers are predominantly European in origin. Peters & Turbules (2004) state how poststructuralism is no longer 'largely a French affair,' but in its 'third or fourth generation' (p. 30) and applied increasingly in different areas, including education (e.g. Henry Giroux, Patti Lather, and Stephen Ball). Those who work in teacher education, when taken together, combine efforts at understanding and critiquing what counts as knowledge and research and at offering new ways of thinking about language, meaning and (self-)identity (e.g. Britzman, 1994, 2003; Cochran-Smith, 1991; Ellsworth, 1989; Greene, 1994) and in curriculum studies (e.g. Chambers, 1998; de Castell, 1996; Sumara, 2002). While the diversity of approaches to poststructural thought may include literary, postmodern, or postcolonial investigations into identity, the sustained interest in poststructuralism indicates an ongoing preoccupation with both language and interpretation. Although not all critiques can be refuted, it is important to appreciate poststructuralism's broad scope and ontological and epistemological priorities of difference. To conclude, Belsey (2002) remarks on the 'project' that is poststructuralism:

> The project is that the questions might replace the bewildering alternatives of the intellectual market place with a more sharply focused undecidability that specifies the options while leaving them open to debate. In that respect, in its emphasis on the degree to which we make our own story, subject to certain specifiable constraints, poststructuralism is at once sceptical towards inherited authority and affirmative about future possibilities (p. 107).

In other words, poststructuralism, through its constant questioning of language and interpretation and in spite of its numerous critics, ultimately invites us to reflect on its uncertainties, its complexities, and even its possibilities.

Theorizing language and identity

As mentioned above, poststructuralism teaches us that identity is always fluid and shifting and that narratives of identity are conflicting and continuous. Then why does identity matter? How does poststructuralism theorize aspects of language, culture and meaning? What are the implications of a poststructural perspective of identity?

Educators interested in research questions concerning language and identity are drawn to poststructuralism (e.g. Britzman, 1994, 2003; Chambers, 1998; Grumet, 1995; Simon, 1995). Poststructuralism offers educators, who are always situated teacher-researchers and human beings, an opportunity to seek a better understanding of the complex ways individuals come to understand themselves and the world in which they live. Focussing on a poststructural perspective on language and identity, I have sought the work of Foucault (1988), de Certeau (1988) and Kerby (1991) to make sense of shifting, contextualized and contradictory representations and narratives of identity. Britzman (2003), Fine (1994) and Richardson (2001, 1997) have also challenged me to rethink (the meanings of) narratives of Francophone education and identity and, in turn, to work towards a poststructural conceptual framework that will undoubtedly present a more complicated (read untidy, uncertain, and uneasy) version of Francophone lived experiences in Canadian and Albertan contexts.

a) *Éveil*: A turning point[10]

It wasn't a 'Sudbury Saturday Night;' it was a Thursday. The nickel city's Italian Centre was hosting a gala dinner. Jean Chrétien was in town, and my father had received complimentary tickets to this pricey affair. I was 18 and anticipated the event with excitement. Upon his arrival at the Caruso Club, Jean Chrétien made the rounds with my father's lawyer, and familiar Jean was greeted warmly by all. He delivered his energetic speech in both official languages; after all, the City of Sudbury was also *la ville de Sudbury*. Towards the end of the dinner, our Member of Parliament – bilingual, Francophone, and female – had to be excused. As she was seated next to Mr. Chrétien, her spot needed to be filled immediately.

My father's lawyer, also at the same table, came to get me. Imagine the delight of a politically astute 18 year old! While he initially glared at me for nearly putting my elbows on the table, he was pleased with his choice. Like Diane Marleau, MP, I too was bilingual, Francophone, and female. Having a new member at the table renewed the conversation. Jean Chrétien was seated to my left. After the conversation got going, he addressed the table remarking that "you speak French like a Francophone." Imagine Jean Chrétien's delight! Imagine my heartbreak.

At that crucial moment, when Jean Chrétien acknowledged the quality of my spoken French, he also denied my Francophone identity. For one moment, during my 18th year, the cat had got my tongue. I was unable to diplomatically respond, "But I am Francophone," although I did manage to utter it under my breath. Like the near-miss elbows incident, I did not want to embarrass or be embarrassed at the *table d'honneur*. To this day, I do not recall the rest of the evening. Little did I know that Chrétien's comments would resonate with me. If, at 18, I was a politically astute, confident and articulate young woman, then why was I rendered speechless? What was it about that moment that unveiled who I was becoming? It struck me, at that moment when my smile was no longer genuine, that I hadn't considered other identity markers. For me, the French language has always been my identity marker par excellence. Language is an instrument of power because it determines who I am and where I belong. It is an expression of my bilingual, bicultural imagination; it restores connections to the bilingual shores of northern Ontario waters. Language, in this instance, defined and continues to define my own individual lived experience as well as the collective lived experience of border crossers like me.

---

[10] Kerby (1991) argues how the self arises not only out of linguistic behavior, but "primarily in crisis situations and at certain turning points in our routine behavior" and, while we are generally not preoccupied with questions of self-identity and self-understanding, "such events often call for self-appraisal" (pp. 6-7). Furthermore, I chose the term 'turning point' to illustrate that interpretation involves a continuous process rather than begins with a specific 'starting point' (p. 44).

What Jean Chrétien made me realize, however, was that identity is comprised of more than language. The role of the 'Other', self-identification, and discourses of culture, schooling, and religion are also important identity markers. Prevailing discourses taught me to tell ourselves and others that the French-Canadian identity was relatively unchanging – we are all the same.[11] While Kerby (1991) emphasizes the importance of understanding how and why such an individual and collective narrative position comes to be learned (p. 7), Richardson (2001) stresses how the individual is "both site and subject of these discursive struggles for identity, and for remaking memory" (p. 36). Simply put, I was already involved in the continuous story of unchanging French Canadians, but at the same time I was illustrating, by speaking French "like a Francophone," that my subjectivity was shifting and contradictory.

Vital to me at the time, although I thought it was merely language, was the Other's identification of me. Kerby (1991) explains how narratives are greatly influenced by the social milieu and external narratives. The influence of Jean Chrétien's political narrative "set up expectations and constraints on [my] personal self-descriptions" and, in turn, external narratives "significantly contribute to the material from which our own narratives are derived" (p. 6). How Jean Chrétien, a popular (Francophone) politician at the time (who would soon after become Prime Minister of Canada), writes me in the narrative of Canada has considerable influence on the stories I tell myself about my own sense of identity and belonging. Britzman (2003), however, invites me to think of subjectivity differently. As she writes, "Questions of subjectivity move beyond the stance of knowing how others make sense and toward a consideration of how reflexivity can be practiced when making sense of oneself is understood as occurring through the construction of the other" (p. 245). Therefore, it is important to re-examine ourselves in light of third-person perspectives and the meanings they produce on our behalf.

---

[11] Recall Belsey's (2002) comment that 'identity' means sameness. The word is formed from Latin's *idem* meaning 'same' and the suffix *–ty* denoting quality or condition. The noun identity, then, comes to express

b) An en-*chant*ing afternoon: A turning point

As a child, I was taught traditional French-Canadian songs. Not any song, however. They were *Les 100 plus belles chansons*. For my family, singing this collection of popular songs was a way of preserving *l'esprit français*. For me, it was the best way to give my Canadian and French spirit its shape, its scenes, its sounds.

At nine years old, with sleeping bag and camping attire in tow, I walked on a tugboat that would change the course of my meaning. No sooner were we five feet from the dock did the group of children and counsellors break into song. Our parents were waving lovingly, but in truth they were grateful for the weeks of peace. The grey tugboat inched through the choppy North Channel of Lake Huron and simultaneously navigated the newborn sisterhood across natural landscapes, lived and imaginary. The life preservers could never rescue me; the songs would. It was during that fateful summer that I learned my collection of English songs, how to not be startled by the sonorous clang of dishes and ditties in the dining hall, how to sit in a circle around the mesmerizing campfire, and how to listen to the song of the loon the next morning. I spent seven summers in these woods and waters. It was the winds that led me to chant 'stroke--stroke--stroke' in a Voyageur canoe, and veered me towards a hyphenated narrative. I

---

the notion of 'sameness' or the quality or condition of being the same. It is important to mention that multiple suggestions have been offered to explain the peculiar formation of 'identity' (Oxford, 2005).

became a French explorer – made up of a fascinating mélange of lyrical texts, majestic images and social cultures.

Re-reading Grumet (1995) opened the door to my pedagogical song. My continued search for solitude in Ontario's near north portrays separation and isolation. The landscape of the North Channel of Lake Huron, of the La Cloche mountains, of Camp Kagawong is in my memory, but frozen in time. As Grumet (1995) eloquently explains, "Educational experience is portrayed as the realization of the betrayed and lonely consciousness, suggesting that whatever is shared in common escapes the distinction that makes it memorable" (p. 43). Her nourishing words feed a spirit set apart by solitude, lived and imaginary. Her inspiration becomes my *singspiration*.

I can remember the infantile sensation. I was as pleased by the crashing of evening waves on the shoreline of the rugged Canadian Shield as by the six hours of disharmonious, folkloric family singing in a crammed car of female relatives on our way to visit *grand-mère* Brazeau in Ottawa. On a sunny autumn afternoon in September 2004, I had the opportunity to visit my aging *mémère*, who has dementia. As I held her gaze, I couldn't help but recall those affectionate moments of song. I sat next to her on the bed. Her blank stare acknowledged the narrowing psychic space between us – *une grand-mère* and *sa petite fille*, forgotten texts and remembered stories, a mind's betrayal and a spirit's loneliness.

My emotional visit with my grandmother represented an experience of pleasure and pain, of teaching and learning. Her songs and her solitude have contributed to my spirit's duality, shape, and life. In other words, my pedagogical song represents stories of a community, passed through one generation of women to the next. The simultaneous act of singing and seeking solitude either at 9 or at 89 reveals the importance of transmitting ways of knowing and being in French and in English, while also providing nurturing and care in a familiar setting of language, memory, and culture.

Kerby (1991), Richardson (2001) and Fine (1994) remind me that narratives are not only temporal but selective. Narratives or life stories represent a historical reality that is ongoing. Self-narration is an autobiographical act that not only informs our sense of self but also generates it; thus, our personal narratives reflect both the past and the need of interpretation (Kerby, 1991, pp. 6-7). For example, my grandmother's dementia influences my involvement in a French-Canadian drama where my understanding of self and French-Canadian identity is caught up in her life stories. My *mémère*'s inability to narrate the past 40 years (during which I was born), however, diminishes my sense of self because her memory loss accentuates my need to articulate the past and the meaning of my role in an ongoing French-Canadian story. As Kerby (1991) rightly points out, "The present transcends itself in a continual and unbroken anticipation of the future and retention of the past" (p. 18). Arising questions about my identity, especially my French-Canadian and Catholic subject-positions, illustrate the intimate connection between meaningful individual and collective life stories, real or imaginary, as well as the important role language and interpretation play in our ongoing histories.

Richardson (2001) sees what poststructuralism has to offer in paying greater attention to the role of temporal continuity in the construction of one's sense of reality and identity. In her call to 'get personal,' she illustrates the connectedness that nuanced accounts for the identity one brings into awareness at the present time, but also linked to the past and the future. In fact, she insists that such stories must be written because writing is how one comes to know about the world and about one's sense of who one is becoming (pp. 33-34). As she explains, writing about our lives poststructurally

> directs us to understand ourselves reflexively as persons writing from particular positions at specific times [and] frees us from trying to write a single text in which everything is said at once to everyone, a text where the 'complete' life is told. The life can be told over and over again, differently nuanced (p. 36).

Writing about my life being intertwined with my *mémère*'s reveals where I am now in the present, in Edmonton away from her, my mother and my sisters, my aunt and cousins with, all of whom I shared so many moments of French-Canadian song. It makes me reconsider the temporality of meaning and the history of lives lived and interpreted.

Making sense and meaning of one's experience or 'lived time' (Kerby, 1991) and memory, however, can be difficult because of contradictory interpretations caught up in the various discourses available (e.g. 'good French Canadian,' 'kinship,' 'bilingualism').

While I continually find binaries such as English Canada and French Canada bothersome, Fine (1994) articulates an interesting way to regard boundaries and borders. Fine (1994) writes an evocative piece on the strands of self, sites of struggle and separation, and on the staggering synchronicity of "working [and denying] the hyphen." Her interpretations of intersectionality reveal the slippery slope of subjectivity, situatedness, and the Self-Other dichotomy. If fixed binary oppositions detract qualitative researchers from investigating what is truly 'between' (Fine, 1994), then it is time to delve into the convoluted world of contradictory co-constructions, critical (self-)consciousness, and *considerate* collaboration.

The word 'considerate' is perhaps not the best word choice when delving into the complex domain of border crossing and shifting relations. Yet, "contradictions litter all narrative forms" (Fine, 1994, p. 75). By stipulating that collaborative work should be *considerate*, I do not mean that participants should be careful not to cause inconvenience when dismantling categories. In fact, the opposite is true. When I consider how I negotiate my contradiction-filled social and cultural location, I want to reveal the francophonie – or at least attempt to understand the 'split affinities' embedded in the francophonie – because of, or despite, my disruptive voice. I am not a prototype Francophone, and it is partly due to this 'split' that I am drawn to interrupt normative ways Canadians and Albertans define and describe 'French Canadians.' As I have grown accustomed to sitting within and across borders, I feel compelled to show *careful thought* – the archaic meaning of 'considerate' (Oxford, 2005). Put another way, I do not so much want to be prudent, but rather I want to be thoughtful in the deliberate act of working critically and self-consciously in the 'split.' As Fine (1994) reminds me, when texts are constructed collaboratively, "the project at hand is to unravel, critically, the blurred boundaries in our relation, and in our texts; to understand the political work of our narratives" (p. 75). In other words, Francophones are *in relation* to Other, who mirrors their identity and difference. And as Abdelkébir Khatibi (1971), the internationally acclaimed Moroccan novelist reminds me, "La différence, comme l'identité, est un rythme et une danse douloureuse" (p. 180).

c) "Bonne *Nuit*": A turning point, a turning place

My sister and I had pleaded with our mother for days. We were in junior high and wanted desperately to attend a Corey Hart concert. We hadn't been allowed to see Loverboy or Chilliwack, but Corey Hart was cute and cool and lived in Québec. We promised to stick together at all times, to keep our eyes and ears open, and to meet my mother promptly in front of the arena after the concert. She wasn't concerned about Corey Hart wearing his sunglasses at night, but rather it was the location of his concert – the Sudbury Arena.

The Sudbury Arena is still the nickel city's largest venue. It seats well over 5,000 and is home to the Sudbury Wolves (Major Junior A hockey team) and July 1st multicultural celebrations. The general neighbourhood of the Sudbury Arena is perhaps the oldest part of the city. During my teenage years, several brick buildings were rather decrepit. Along the bleak strip you would find two sleazy hotels, where rooms could be rented by the hour and girls performed on stage. Walking quickly along the rundown street, you could encounter prostitutes, drug dealers, and street people. Across from the Sudbury Arena was the dilapidated railway station, where unsuspecting travellers receive their first glimpse of the Big Nickel town. This area of downtown was inviting to delinquents and feared by parents.

In 1997, when I was living in Guelph, Ontario, I planned to attend a concert at the very same Sudbury Arena – and with much anticipation. Thinking back, my mother must have been rejoicing because, as a stubborn pre-teen, I was not particularly interested in speaking French or doing anything French. By my late teens, I was choosing to attend Franco-Ontarian events: plays, concerts, documentary screenings, and so on. And when I chose to be a French frog for a festival weekend at the Sudbury Arena, everyone seemed happy – my Franco-Ontarian friends, my mother and, more importantly, myself.

The festival I speak of is truly one of Francophone folly. In fact, *La Nuit sur l'étang* is better known as "*la folie collective d'un peuple en party!*" Since its inception in 1973, when my mother first attended the Laurentian University festivities, French frogs from throughout Ontario have been called upon to celebrate their particular Francophone identity collectively. *La Nuit sur l'étang* (literally 'The Night on the Pond') still offers an informal way for the Franco-Ontarian people (*un peuple*) to meet each other, encourage Franco-Ontarian songwriters and musicians, and just be Franco-

Ontarian. In the 1970s the music festival was, indeed, rather informal. However, by the 1990s, *La Nuit* had grown so popular that the university facilities could no longer accommodate the large crowds of Franco-Ontarians coming by bus from Windsor, Ottawa, and surrounding areas in northern Ontario. One year, the organizers moved *La Nuit* to the Sudbury Arena. It was a grand affair: a compilation CD would be produced, a big-name Québécois act would be performing (none other than party animal Jean Leloup), and *MusiquePlus* would cover it all. Lights, camera, action – the style and, thus, the very gathering itself was changed, for the worse.

But the year I attended *La Nuit sur l'étang* at the Sudbury Arena, it was mesmerizing. It was truly impressive: young and not-so-young partying together on the barren cement floor, beer gardens filled with enthusiastic Francophones imbibing Northern Ale, almost famous musicians strolling about. I even said hello to Jean-Guy 'Chuck' Labelle, and he looked me in the eye and said hello back (his Christmas CD with Robert Paquette is still my favourite *album de Noël*). I had made the 6-hour trip from Guelph to Sudbury to hang out at *La Nuit* with my girlfriend from Teacher's College. At one point, feeling not-so-young, we climbed the staircase to sit on the bleachers. We could actually hear each other, catch up, and feel good about being together at another Francophone event. What became more interesting was not talking, but scanning the arena together: the thousands of Franco-Ontarians at *La Nuit*, the comings and goings of the rambunctious crowd, the view of the grandiose stage, the 'collective folly of a people enjoying the party.' Looking back, the surroundings of the Sudbury Arena had not changed, but the attraction and significance surely had. For one night (*une 'Nuit'*), it was a place where my mother wanted me to be. And as one French frog salutes another at such a spectacular soirée, "*Bonne Nuit!*"

De Certeau (1988), in his discussion of everyday practices as 'ways of operating' or doing things, analyzes the 'ordinary language' of popular cultures. His particular focus on language and interpretation is useful when examining more closely the stories and songs of a celebration such as *La Nuit sur l'étang*. De Certeau posits that many everyday practices are tactical in character (i.e. victories of the 'weak' over the 'strong') (p. xix) and, therefore, the political dimension to everyday practices must also be considered. Tactics, 'an art of the weak,' are procedures representing everyday practices of consumers who take advantage of circumstances to manoeuvre within a 'strong' system. These tactics "show the extent to which intelligence is inseparable from the everyday struggles and pleasures that it articulates" (p. xx). Central to de Certeau's argument is consumers using everyday practices that are at once creative and adaptive in a powerful world that seeks to dominate them. Their creativity is never-ending.

During *La Nuit sur l'étang*, the '*grenouilles*' – appropriating the normative symbol of French Canadians as French frogs, as named by Anglophones – re-invent or make sense of reality (de Certeau, 1988, p. xiii) by coming together to celebrate difference. Franco-Ontarians and their guests by being together, speaking an Other's language and by recognizing songs and stories of '*un peuple*,' transform the cultural event into an act of resistance. As de Certeau (1988) explains, "internal metamorphosis does not in any way compromise the sincerity with which it may be believed nor the lucidity with which, from another point of view, the struggles and inequalities hidden under the established order may be perceived" (p. 178). Put differently, *La Nuit sur l'étang* becomes a way of using imposed systems and resisting them in using a specific place, or in taking one's place (*prendre sa place*) in an officially bilingual city, to come together in a utopian place of celebration. *La Nuit sur l'étang* has become a 'utopian point of reference' of Franco-Ontarian culture, but more importantly of linguistic and cultural survival.

It is precisely in this place of struggle and inequality that power redistribution becomes evident: "That is where the opacity of a 'popular' culture could be said to manifest itself—a dark rock that resists all assimilation' (de Certeau, 1988, p. 18). Sudbury's *La Nuit sur l'étang* becomes an illustrative example of the tactical ways of operating: of doing things in constraining spaces, of taking everyday struggles and producing a successful cultural event with what they have (and with minimal budgetary support from, for instance, the City of Greater Sudbury) and taking pleasure in the continuing success of *La Nuit* after 34 years. As de Certeau (1988, p. 18) explains,

> Like the skill of a driver in the streets of Rome or Naples, there is a skill that has its connoisseurs and its esthetics exercised in any labyrinth of powers, a skill ceaselessly recreating opacities and ambiguities—spaces of darkness and trickery—in the universe of technocratic transparency, a skill that disappears into them and reappears again, taking no responsibility for the administration of the totality (p. 18).

This combination of manipulation and enjoyment, of playing and foiling the other's game (*jouer/déjouer le jeu de l'autre*), exemplifies de Certeau's analysis of everyday practices as 'ways of operating' in popular culture. In telling about *La Nuit sur l'étang*, this account describes the tactics possible within the structure of everyday practice and relative to a particular situation. As de Certeau (1988) argues, individuals (in this case, Francophones outside Québec) are constantly developing strategies and tactics to deal with the constraining order of everyday life.

On a related note, in Alberta, Francophones 'make do' as well (pp. 30-31). The ways of walking, or pedestrian speech acts, are also useful in analyzing identity and place. In general, de Certeau (1988) analyzes the articulation of places by examining the limits of representation on a map and the modalities of walking as a space of enunciation (pedestrian enunciation with particular paths). In particular, I look to French place names in Alberta, and specifically Edmonton where I live, to make sense of de Certeau's argument. Names and symbols are an indication of spatial practices and the relationship between and among names, symbols and words and their manipulations and meanings. For de Certeau (1988),

> In the spaces brutally lit by an alien reason, proper names carve out pockets of hidden and familiar meanings. They 'make sense'; in other

> words, they are the impetus of movements, like vocations and calls that turn or divert an itinerary by giving it a meaning (or a direction) (*sens*) that was previously unforseen. These names create a nowhere in places; they change them into passages (p. 104).

One name change in Edmonton that is significant to Franco-Albertans is in the 'French quarters' of Bonnie Doon, when 91st Street became '*Rue Marie-Anne-Gaboury*' (the Campus Saint-Jean, a full-fledged faculty of the University of Alberta is located on this *rue*). A dozen tall, brick pillars were erected by the City of Edmonton (after 15 years of lobbying on the part of the Francophone community) along the 91 Street corridor into a definable Francophone space. This proper name, rather than a numerical one, orients my steps and the routes/roots of Francophones in Western Canada (Marie-Anne Gaboury was the first white woman – and French Canadian – in Western Canada; she was also the grandmother of Louis Riel). De Certeau (1988) discusses spatial and signifying practices that are believable, memorable, and primitive. For example, the use of proper names organizes a discourse on/of the city in that spatial appropriations "make habitable or believable the place that they clothe with a word" (p. 105). The words *Rue Marie-Anne-Gaboury*, rather than 91st Street, represent "linking acts and footsteps, opening meanings and directions" in the tactical world of everyday practices of Francophones outside Québec. In this sense, both *Rue Marie-Anne-Gaboury* in Edmonton, Alberta and *La Nuit sur l'étang* in Sudbury, Ontario become stories entailing spatial practices that concern everyday tactics and the simultaneous labour and pleasure of changing relationships between places and passages.

Lingering reflections

In true poststructural fashion, my research project is an attempt to both understand and critique interrelated questions of language, culture and identity in dynamic and increasingly diverse Francophone communities in Canada and Alberta. As a strand of postmodern thought, poststructuralism pays particular attention to specific histories, small stories and local contexts. Poststructuralism invites us, then, to pay greater attention to the role of language and meaning in our construction of reality and identity to better understand the ambiguities and contingencies of the lived realities of Francophones in a place like Alberta. It also extends the discussion on language and identity by questioning the ways in which interrelated discourses of culture and difference (and othering) reveal more nuanced understandings of power, knowledge, and reality. Furthermore, its insistence on the multiplicity of interpretations, on the fluidity of identity and on the complexity of language tends to illustrate the importance of subjectivity in re-viewing (Francophone) 'reality' from different perspectives and at different times in our lives. Above all, poststructuralism challenges teacher-researchers not only to re-search the plural faces of (Francophone) identity and subjectivity, but also to seek new ways of making sense of intertwined worlds and lived experiences.

Drawing on the literature in the fields of curriculum studies and social studies, I attempt next to outline some of the discourses, narratives and texts that education researchers have developed when it comes to describing what counts as 'curriculum,' 'curriculum inquiry,' 'social studies,' and 'social studies research' in telling and writing stories of (Francophone) lived experiences in Canadian and Albertan contexts.

CHAPTER 3

CURRICULUM THEORY AND CURRICULUM STUDIES

Two or three things I know, two or three things I know for sure,
and one of them is that to go on living I have to tell stories, that stories
are the one sure way I know to touch the heart and change the world.
– Dorothy Allison (1996, p. 72)

Moé j'raconte des histoires
Des histoires que vous m'avez contées
J'les raconte à ma manière
Mais tout seul j'peux pas les inventer
Car du fond de mon coeur
C'est vous qui parlez
Chu poète à mes heures
Mais surtout
Je sais vous écouter
Parler de tout
– Paul Piché (1983)

The truth about stories is that that's all we are.
– Thomas King (2003, p. 2)

Curriculum theory and revealing what is worthwhile

> "Hard?" The Professor shrugged, spread his palms. "Art—the girl has 'makings'. It takes red-hot fury to dig 'em up. If I'm harsh it's for her own good. More often than not worthwhile things hurt. Art's worthwhile." Again he shrugged.
>
> – Emily Carr (1946, p. 47)

In her autobiography, *Growing Pains*, Emily Carr (considered Canada's most famous woman painter) re-examines her life and struggles with finding a voice. She recalls a time when, shy of sixteen years old, she asked her guardian's permission to leave the family home in Victoria to study at an art school in San Francisco. He grew stern at her insistence, asking if this "Art idea" was "just naughtiness" or a "passing whim" – to which Emily Carr responded: "No, it is very real—it has been growing for a long time" (Carr, 1946, p. 16).

For me, to write about Francophone communities and experiences is hard. It can also hurt. And if it is hurtful, then it must be worthwhile. As mentioned in previous sections, it is something that has been growing for a long time. As a teacher and former student in the Francophone school system, the problems and possibilities of the Francophone school community are very real. So, too, are the multiplicities and complexities of Francophone identity. In this third section, I will review current literature and research in the fields of curriculum studies and social studies, as they pertain to questions of language, culture and identity in plural societies such as Canada. The first part of the review will describe the significance of paying closer attention to interrelated notions of history, memory, language, culture, geography and identity, by drawing on (Canadian) curriculum theory and vocabulary. The second part of this review will provide a social studies framework for studying interdependent issues of citizenship and identity and unity and diversity. Overall, this comprehensive literature review will attempt to reveal what is worthwhile about doing research on Francophone lived experience and identity in Alberta.

Searching for an understanding of curriculum

The word 'curriculum' is generally defined as a course, as at a school or university, and when it is expressed as 'curriculum vitae' it becomes the course of one's life. There is a 1902 reference to 'curriculum' in the English Oxford Dictionary: "Anciently biography was more of a mere *curriculum vitae* than it is now" (Oxford, 2005, n.p.). Curriculum, then, is a journey that can be informed by personal biography. There are a range of discourses that define curriculum, all of which influence interpretations of teaching, learning, and identity. In searching for an understanding of curriculum as *the course of one's life*, especially "teachers' curriculum life" (Aoki, 1991b, p. 9), I will attempt to uncover how personal biography can inform concepts of curriculum, teaching and learning and how curriculum theory, especially Canadian curriculum theory and curriculum theory from a poststructuralist perspective, can shape personal involvement in curricular relations. For example, reading Aoki (1991a, 1991b), Chambers (1999), Greene (1997, 1995, 1991), Grumet (1995) and Sumara, Davis & Laidlaw (2001) have enabled me to see curriculum and interrelated notions of teaching, learning, self and community in a different light. The poststructuralist authors noted above have made me wonder about the curricular *relations* between educational practices and curriculum theory, between school subjects and human subjects, between stories of curriculum and life stories. While they have broadened my outlook on curriculum, they have also encouraged me to search for a more open understanding of 'curriculum' and to *re-search* curriculum, self and community in Canadian and Francophone contexts, that is, to look again at 'curriculum,' but see it in different, more expansive ways.

Curriculum theorists hold that school curriculum is not simply a technical document outlining prescribed learning outcomes or specifying content to be covered or teaching strategies and student assessment procedures to be used. Rather, curriculum should be conceived as a continuous conversation. Curriculum is fundamentally "the process of making sense with a group of people of the systems that shape and organize the world that we can think about together" (Grumet, 1995, p. 19). On the one hand, curriculum is an ongoing conversation because it is a social process that involves the lives of learners studying their world. On the other, it is a lasting conversation because it relates a multitude of "histories of human action and interpretation" (p. 19) to the lived experiences of learners in the world. For Greene (1991), "curriculum has to do with the life of meaning, with ambiguities, and with relationships... with transformations and with fluidity, with change" (p. 107). Curriculum is an adventure into meaning which students and teachers should lend their lives in hopes of seeing more. In this sense, the meaning always "lies ahead" (p. 121). But the search for understanding curriculum and its multiple meanings must be a conscious one.

Curriculum has historically been conceived as an object; however, it can no longer be described as an impersonal form of expression. If curriculum is a social process, then a group's interest in curriculum is essential to their interpretation of the world that intrigues them. Moreover, curriculum should be viewed as a meaningful, continual, and subjective process. As Greene (1997) writes, "Learning, to be meaningful, must involve such a 'going beyond' [what a learner has been]"; it must also involve a consciousness that "throws itself outward *towards* the world" (pp. 139-140). In this regard, consciousness refers to *something* and entails a self-reflective process between self as learner and self as a conscious subject. In other words, "consciousness *of* something [involves] the individual [who] reflects upon his relation to the world, his manner of comporting himself with respect to it, the changing perspectives through which the world presents itself to him" (Greene, 1997, p. 140).

Therefore, Greene's interpretation of intentional consciousness could apply to the need of continually (re-)discovering Canadians' relationship to issues of language, culture and identity. A Canadian consciousness could throw itself 'outward' towards the world of Canadian curriculum theory because Canadian curriculum theorists (e.g. Chambers, 1999; Haig-Brown, 1995; Sumara, Davis & Laidlaw, 2001) are attentive to these issues and how they influence a different sense of curriculum, community and self. While poststructuralism and postmodernism, autobiography and narrative, geography and place can describe contemporary influences of curriculum studies in Canada, understanding curriculum also requires a critical look at the historical, social and political contexts of schooling, policies and practices.

Looking back: Historical perspectives of Canadian curriculum studies

Tomkins (1986, 1979) recounts the history of curriculum development and reflects the unsettled past of Canadian curriculum. Tomkins' historical perspective on Canadian curriculum development illustrates how Canadian curriculum history since

Confederation has evolved and suggests how competing ideologies influenced what knowledge was considered most worthy. Current programs of study reflect this historical and ideological journey (e.g. Sheehan, 1979b; Tomkins, 1986, 1979). It is important to recognize that the history of the Canadian curriculum is far from being clearly defined. It is interpreted by Tomkins (1979) from "at least two broad vantage points" (p. 1), but also as "a result of the general neglect by radical revisionists of such topics as nationalism, religion and ethnic conflict around which so much curriculum change and controversy have revolved in Canada" (p. 5). For example, Tomkins (1979) touches on cultural survival and cultural conflict (e.g. Francophone nationalism and the Quiet Revolution) as well as on the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. As Sheehan (1979b) points out, "Cultural conflict...becomes in reality curriculum conflict" (p. 52).

Sheehan (1979b) also looks to the history of curriculum in Canadian and Albertan contexts to describe the traditional and ongoing curriculum question of what knowledge is to be acquired and how it is to be learned. For example, Sheehan (1979a) presents the evolution of the reader used in Canadian classrooms before and after WWII. In her historical comparison of Canadian elementary readers, she states: "…what was taught in the readers was a view of life that accepted one's social and economic position and that denied creativity, originality, and anything that would upset the planned scheme of things" (p. 79). It is interesting to note that the textbooks, writes Sheehan, "also taught by what they omitted" (p. 80). This observation confirms what Eisner (1992) says about education and how it is "a normative enterprise" (p. 302). As he concludes, "educational ideologies, broadly speaking, and curricular ideologies, more specifically, fundamentally influence our deliberations about what the curriculum should become and what schools should be" (p. 324).

For the majority of Francophone students in Alberta, their current school system remains a "self-serving instrument" (whose mission is to develop a Francophone identity and a sense of belonging to the Francophone community). Tomkins (1979) argues that the religious and secular learning of the curriculum were intertwined until 1960 in order to serve the political agenda of 'French-Canadian society.' One could argue in 2007 that the French and Social Studies curricula used in Francophone classrooms, in particular those outside Québec, serve the same cause of post-Conquest *survivance*.[12] For example, Francophone school districts in Alberta are very much concerned with the survival of Franco-Albertans and of the French language in Western Canada (e.g. Alberta Learning, 2001; Dalley, 2002; Levasseur-Ouimet, 1994). Moreover, although a public school district in Edmonton, most of its schools are denominational, and the demands of the local Roman Catholic population remain quite strong, even narrow and impractical (e.g. Dubé, 2002), in an era of global citizenship and a pluralistic 'French-Canadian society.' Therefore, the question featured in Tomkins' and Sheehan's work remains the same: what should schools teach? After all, not only has the course of study taught in Francophone schools been controversial since WWI, as Tomkins (1986) describes, but it continues to be so in the wider context of dynamic Francophone communities throughout Canada (e.g. Dalley, 2002; Heller, 1999; Laplante, 2001).

---

[12] It is noteworthy that in Québec, "history, along with citizenship education, receive a more prominent place in the curriculum, not so much as a nation-building tool but rather to help students from increasingly different ethnic backgrounds develop the skills needed to successfully integrate into society and actively participate in its democratic future" (Lévesque, 2004, pp. 66-67). Despite more inclusive and less Québec nationalist programs and resources, however, "most Francophone students still adhere to a Québec nationalist historical narrative, which gives pride of place to the survival and accomplishments of Québécois" (p. 67).

Looking forward: Contemporary perspectives of Canadian curriculum studies

The work of Ng (1993), Lewis (1990), Sumara & Davis (1999), Haig-Brown (1995), Dion (2004), and Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt (2002a, 2002b) have led me to question curriculum discourses of identity and difference. I have selected these six Canadian conversations about curriculum theory and difference based on their individual and collective responses to normative representations of identity in educational practices. Generally speaking, these authors have provided me with new concepts and vocabularies to re-search and better interpret interrelated notions of curriculum, self and community. These authors have shared compelling stories that illustrate the importance of interrupting, disrupting or rupturing dominant ways of thinking about the Other and of renarrating complex and evolving relationships among curriculum discourses of race, gender and class (Ng, 1993), patriarchy (Lewis, 1990), sexuality (Sumara & Davis, 1999), culture and geography (Haig-Brown, 1995), memory (Dion, 2004), métissage (Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt, 2001), knowledge and identity. Ultimately, they have created sites for critical inquiry around such interrelated discourses and contribute alternative ways of knowing and being in the Canadian (curriculum) context.

a) Disrupting "common sense" ways of knowing

For Ng (1993), the theme of race, class and gender relations is critical in understanding nation building in Canada. In theorizing the interrelationship of gender, race and class, Ng (1993) provides a framework for exploring the *relational* character of socially and politically constructed categories. Instead of referring to gender, race and class as imaginary categories, it is important to acknowledge the interconnectedness of "real and concrete" social relations (p. 51). By treating race, gender and class as relations rather than categories, dominant groups of people are beckoned to disrupt their "common sense" (p. 52) ways of knowing, while different groups of people can potentially find their place in the (re)telling of nation building. Understanding race, gender and class in relational terms, then, calls for dynamic reciprocity: that is, "to insist on discovering how race, gender, and class are expressed concretely in everyday practice lodged in time and space. It is to insist that race, gender, and class cannot be treated as universal and fixed. They must be understood as fluid, constantly changing, interactive, and dialectical" (p. 57). Reconsidering the relationship among gender, race and class, then, should interrupt common sensical ways of knowing and being in Canadian society.

b) Interrupting patriarchy and renegotiating identity

In her discussion of the dynamics of the feminist classroom, Lewis (1990) engages in a self-reflective exercise in which she uses student experiences as a learning resource to examine and question the psychological, social, and sexual conditions of the feminist classroom. Social dynamics represent one sphere of tension in the feminist classroom, and this tension is organized around feminist methodology of 'consciousness raising.' This effective practice challenges dominant forms of patriarchal discourse and, in turn, encourages women to engage in discussions of subordination and make their 'knowing' public. When such consciousness-raising discussions occur in the presence of the oppressor, however, the oppressed succumb to contradictory forces in the feminist classroom. On the one hand, women are prevented from engaging in such discussions, while they are violated when they do share their stories; on the other, if classroom dynamics are not addressed in such instances, then the marginalization of the oppressed continues. For her, a feminist classroom must "interrupt" the social dynamics of patriarchy; instead of redirecting discussion 'away from' male social identity and practices, social location must be acknowledged. Lewis (1990) seeks not to embarrass men, but rather to create the 'self-reflexive space' needed to address women's subordination and analyze male privilege. In tracing the complexities of the consciousness raising process of her students, Lewis (1990) reveals how both women and men can renegotiate their identity within a patriarchal society and how "moments of possibility" can have a profound impact on women's lives – including the teacher's.

c) Interrupting "heteronormativity"

Borrowing from Lewis' (1990) notion of "interrupting patriarchy," Sumara & Davis (1999) explore the ways in which heteronormativity might be interrupted in and out of school. Framed by queer theory that questions the heterosexualized curriculum and bridged to curriculum theory that needs to interpret continually shifting identities, the research conducted confirms the importance of constantly interrupting and renarrating the "unruly category" of 'heterosexual.'

Two collaborative projects provided interpretive research sites that were embedded in the contexts of culture, language, sexuality, understanding, and teaching: a two-year literary project with a Queer Teachers Study Group and a two-month teaching project with one teacher and her grade 5/6 class. Both research projects had participants wonder about experienced identifications, sexual stirrings, and heteronormative interruptions. The interpretation of literary texts revealed that identifications were not similar; rather, they were incredibly varied and, in turn, challenged participants to revisit their personal understandings of the complexly formed and experienced sexuality and identity. The stirrings also confirmed the need to understand the complex ways in which knowledge and sexuality are intertwined with experiences of identity, while the interruptions created more interesting ways of thinking about literary text and expressed and experienced identity. Bridging the gap between queer theory and curriculum theory can alter traditional curriculum by embracing disruptive pedagogy and more interesting forms for thinking.

d) Putting "two worlds together": Resistance and renewal

Haig-Brown (1995) provides a social analysis of adult and Aboriginal education in a community setting. Her research methodology focuses on critical ethnography to examine the power and contradiction within a First Nations adult science career preparation program. Haig-Brown's (1995) work on contradiction and curriculum involves a process of 'curriculum as lived' while also uncovering the *simultaneous* being and becoming of people who attended Vancouver's Native Education Centre (NEC). As Haig-Brown (1995) illustrates, both Natives and non-Natives "walk between the processes of coming to know science and coming to know First Nations cultures" (p. 199). What intrigues me the most about the journeys described in her ethnographic study is the emphasis on *becoming* a First Nations science student. One underlying reason why First Nations adult learners need to become (more) Aboriginal is because of geography. While some NEC students have lived on reserves much of their lives, others have had little contact with other Aboriginal people. To acknowledge, promote and enhance cultural understanding is one way that NEC addressed representations of Aboriginal identity.

While Haig-Brown (1995) engages in the complex politics of Aboriginal education and the programs of study at NEC, this non-Native researcher also reflects critically on her position in a two-year ethnographic study of First Nations control of education. Such self-reflexive analysis adds an important dimension to the emergent notion of contradiction in curriculum as lived and as planned. In general, Haig-Brown (1995) examines how socially constructing reality has implications for non-Native and Native educators alike in the development and implementation of indigenous pedagogy and non-Native curriculum. By interviewing the program's participants and teachers and selecting their words to tell a story of power, culture and control, Haig-Brown (1995) does justice to the strength of ethnography as a valid form of research and to the efforts of Aboriginal people in seeking control of their 'formal' education.

e) **Disrupting memories**

Dion (2004) discusses the importance of disrupting and rupturing dominant ways of thinking about the Other in general and of addressing the disrupting memories of post-contact histories between First Nations people and non-Aboriginal people in particular. Put another way, she calls for the engagement of dominant groups of people in a transformative process of listening, acknowledging, and "learning from" the Other and their stories. In advocating alternative ways of knowing, Dion presents the "dangerous" work (p. 20) of "difficult knowledge" (p. 8).

Dion's article on "(re)telling to disrupt" illustrates the complex and dynamic relationship with alterity. As she argues, Canadians hearing First Nations post-contact histories between Aboriginal people and Canadian communities is problematic. On the one hand, Dion – an Aboriginal scholar of Lenni Lenape ancestry – explores the problems of representing the lived experiences of Aboriginal peoples in Canada while, on the other, provides a theoretical and pedagogical framework for better understanding the "humanity" of Aboriginal peoples. Dion's strong desire and sense of responsibility drive her to bear witness and give testimony to the deep sense of loss, discrimination, and racism experienced by Aboriginals across Canada. Heard and recognized, Aboriginals' stories – disruptive and intimate at once – can be a source of healing, harmony and (legitimized) history, primarily for Aboriginals but also for Canadian communities at large. Not heard and denied, such stories can perpetuate injustice towards Aboriginals.

In other words, the pursuit of justice for Aboriginals implicates a painful process that is two-fold. First, Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals alike must recognize the healing nature of narration and, second, both must embrace the reciprocal nature of listening. For Dion, then, (re)telling to disrupt becomes "dangerous" work: non-Aboriginal people must not only acknowledge their historical and cultural relationship with Aboriginals, but they must also put into question their own national and individual identities. The arduous task of (re)telling disruptive stories requires an expanded understanding of non-Aboriginal people's implications in ongoing conditions of injustice and hopelessness. Ultimately, non-Aboriginals must embrace a transformative process of "learning from" in which the demands of understanding become difficult. In (re)telling and sharing Aboriginals' stories with non-Aboriginals, alternative representations of Aboriginals inform and reflect who Canadians are, were, and will become.

f) Moving towards a curriculum of métissage

Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt (2002a) explore ways of conducting research in the area of curriculum studies that matter to the teacher-researchers. Their research is highly personal, narrative and even poetic. Their respective 'creation stories' tell of three inhabited, temporal places – "In the Beginning", "When the World Was New", and "Transformations" – all of which evoke a different kind of curricular imagination.[13] They are framed around the notions of memory and métissage. While these authors imagine the curriculum of métissage in an intimate way, they also put into question if educational research in the field of curriculum studies truly maps authentic ways of knowing and being.

Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt (2002a) embark on a creative journey. Writing their world through creation stories and then focussing on the discourse of métissage provide a starting point where teachers and/or researchers can probe into different and changing educational conditions and better appreciate how identity and place impact upon teaching and learning. In particular, métissage represents "a site for writing and surviving in the interval between different cultures and languages; a way of merging and blurring genres, texts and identities; an active literary stance, political strategy and pedagogical praxis" (Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt, 2002b, n.p.). In other words, by taking curriculum personally, teacher-researchers can extend their political and pedagogical understanding of curriculum as well. Narrative exploration of métissage in the curriculum becomes meaningful because conducting research in the lived experience is revealing. While narrative as curriculum brings out the truths teachers and researchers seek, it also permits educators to engage in educational issues that matter to them.

---

[13] Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt (2002b) want to bring into visibility, by way of a curriculum of métissage, the vast landscape of difference. Curricular imagination and understanding should be embraced in Canada if pedagogical praxis is to reflect our diverse origins, or creation stories, and our becomings, or transformations. In this regard, the social and cultural locations of Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt (2002b) reflect their individual and collective relationship to the complexity of métissage and their deep desire to explore the disparate voices and tensions in multiple discourse communities.

Mapping authentic ways of knowing and being

The work of Ng (1993), Lewis (1990), Sumara & Davis (1999), Haig-Brown (1995), Dion (2004) and Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt (2002a, 2002b) sheds light on contemporary curriculum discourses in the Canadian context. Individually and collectively, their work enables a critical study of the possibilities intertwined in the processes of imagining, questioning and discussing complex and interrelated questions of identity and difference in the context of Canadian curriculum theory. Whereas their work stirred in me the desire to better understand the complexly structured and experienced forms of knowledge and identity, it also prompted me to be more attentive to these complex relations within Francophone school communities. For example, the authors named above invited me to refute simplistic notions of (French Canadian) identity. Francophones in Canada are not necessarily White, Christian (read Catholic) and from Québec; yet, politically and socially constructed categories of 'French Canada' and 'French Canadian' perpetuate the normativity of experiences and representations of such categories and continue to essentialize (Francophone) identity in the Canadian context.

I turned to Ng (1993) because she emphasizes the relational character and the interconnectedness of race, class and gender – social and political constructs that propell me into rethinking the static categories assigned to 'Francophones' and 'Anglophones.' Continuing to situate 'Canadians' in this binary does not disrupt 'common sense' ways of knowing (Ng, 1993). Disrupting normalized ways of thinking about the Other invites dominant groups of people to reconsider their position of privilege and power (e.g. Dion, 2004; Lewis, 1990; Ng, 1993). Dion (2004) reminded me that situating various representations of Francophone identity in relation to Canadian history and society is, indeed, an arduous task – one that involves recognizing Self and Other and the two in relation. Therefore, the challenge of articulating difference differently is acknowledging how 'national' identities (plural) are produced and reproduced, how they are lived in all parts of Canada, and how they have been historically (Dion, 2004; Ng, 1993), socially (Lewis, 1990; Sumara & Davis, 1999), and geographically and culturally (Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt, 2002a; Haig-Brown, 1995).

More importantly, though, is recognizing how belongings influence the landscape of identity, ontology, and epistomology. For example, to many Canadians and others in the world, a French Canadian is a French Canadian. Yet, as a Franco-Ontarian working in Alberta, I have learned – and lived – that a Francophone is not necessarily a Franco-Albertan. To confuse matters further, even a self-declared Franco-Ontarian is not necessarily considered a Francophone in Ontario. As I articulate different forms of belonging to the francophonie *albertaine*, *ontarienne* or *canadienne*, Probyn's (1996) words haunt me: "If you have to think about belonging, perhaps you are already outside" (p. 8). While the category of 'French Canadians' is (re)produced in English-language media as essentially different and foreign, the category is lived daily, not only on the hockey rink,[14] but in the national arena of Canada and all its corners. The generalized category 'the French,' like other categories, is lived not so much collectively, but individually (Probyn, 1996, p. 22). In other words, to say that being French Canadian and living as a French Canadian are synonymous would be false. Equating an individual way of living one's sense of belonging to a general way of categorizing forms of belonging calls into question current thinking around Canada's socially and politically constructed 'French Canadians' and 'English Canadians.' Borrowing Probyn's (1996) insightful words, because Canadians live within a complex yet fascinating map of different points, we should conceptualize social relations differently in order to make then connect differently (p. 23). 'Canadian' ways of belonging, being and knowing should be mapped out differently.

Dion's (2004) work of (re)telling to disrupt and putting into question national and individual identities, in particular, reminds me of an "ideological haunted house" – the place researchers are called upon to explore precisely because of the tension and inhospitability that reside there. Britzman et al. (1993) describe this place:

> The question of how knowledge of identities and cultures is produced, encountered, and dismissed in classrooms homogeneous and heterogeneous is completely ignored. The critical point of departure is not how to make knowledge hospitable. Rather knowledge, when recast from the perspectives of those historically unaccounted for, becomes an ideological haunted house: illusory, evasive, and preying upon the rational-minded 'victims.' It is this tension we wish to explore (p. 189).

Uneven power relations and contradictory representations within and between categories of difference and identities means revisiting personal understandings of the complexities of identity (Sumara & Davis, 1999) and tracing the complexities of consciousness raising of students and teachers around questions of privilege and dominant practices in society (Lewis, 1990). To confront and transform already ambivalent meanings of identities means attending to the representation of oppressed subjects, especially when their perspectives have been dismissed or ignored (Britzman et al., 1993). What I am left with, then, is a renewed sense of being and belonging as I inhabit many interrelated spaces: historical, political, social, individual, and so on. Admittedly, various essentialisms continue to circulate and the problematic of essence remains to be understood (Fuss, 1989).[15] Canadians who live within and beyond the imposed limits of an officially bilingual and multicultural country need to explore new forms of dialogue if we are to consider different representations and meanings of identities and belongings in the Canadian context differently.

---

[14] I refer here to Don Cherry, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC-TV) most flamboyant and outspoken commentator, during Hockey Night in Canada, especially when it comes to his continued oppressive representations of 'the French' (and women) in Canada.

What is common to the work of the six Canadian curriculum conversations mentioned above, along with other curriculum theorists cited, is that they all prompt me to examine more closely the complexities of identity, difference and inclusivity. Broadly speaking, they all explore questions of learning and teaching, the primary concern of the field of curriculum studies. And they use language to get Canadians to think in a different way about self, community and identity. In using words such as 'disrupting,' 'interrupting,' '(re)telling,' and so on, they attempt to find new and interesting uses of language to try to begin to represent the fullness of someone's experience. Overall, they have encouraged me to think deeply about the ongoing interpretations of identity in the Canadian (curriculum) context.

---

[15] When people speak essentially, Fuss (1989) argues, it becomes important to understand what kinds of essentialisms they claim (p. 4). For example, 'nominal essence' emphasizes that language assigns or produces essentialism. The category of 'French Canadians' becomes a linguistic kind of essence; language in general names and sorts objects, effectively establishing their existence in one's mind (p. 5).

Perhaps what I find most helpful at this particular time, in understanding the complexity of lived experience and representation, is the possibility of creating a curriculum of métissage (Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt, 2002a, 2002b). The concepts of métissage and identity become critical when studying encounters in race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, religion, and so on. Lived experience, with particular attention to difference, can be explored in two ways: first, moving towards a curriculum of métissage in a broad sense, and second, taking curriculum personally. In both cases, it is vital to tackle autobiographical writing in order to examine the interplay of curriculum and significance of difference in today's complex world.

Revealing moments of métissage

Revealing moments of métissage can probe the roots of one's identity while also situating the routes of knowledge. In this discussion, métissage is a search for meaning or connection. On one level, métissage describes the creative possibility of playing with the in-between, where the here and there is blurred in hybrid moments of lived experience. On another level, métissage depicts an imaginative opening to a fluid reality that is both understood and questioned. In other words, "literary métissage offers the possibility for writing and telling creation stories autobiographically, stories which are rooted in history and memory, but are also stories of be-coming" (Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt, 2002b, n.p.). In this sense, métissage is a creative, literary endeavour of "wondering" that is mindful of both individual and collective narrative.

Métissage could also emphasize the need for grounding in an era of globalization where the 'local' is all too often forgotten (e.g. Haig-Brown, 1995; Smith, 2000). However, while the influence of contemporary globalization on teaching and curriculum is overwhelming, a pedagogical framework of "putting worlds together" or of "truth-dwelling" reveals the dynamics of the curriculum as lived. Both Haig-Brown's (1995) and Smith's (2000) theoretical landscape takes into account the interconnectedness of dominant discourses and the emergence of alternative ones. On the one hand, teachers have become increasingly alienated from knowing and being (Smith, 2000), and on the other, (Aboriginal) learners have wrestled with the contradictions of power-full curriculum. In creating a curriculum of métissage, a "genuine dialogue with the dominant discourse(s)" is initiated (Lionnet, 1989 cited in Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt, 2002b, n.p.), which offers "the possibility of *rapprochement* between mainstream and alternative curriculum discourses" (Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt, 2002b, n.p.).

While they develop a model of identity that is not new (e.g. the metaphor of métissage), Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt (2002a, 2002b) remind educators of the importance of opening the reader to otherness. In a country as vast and grand as Canada, encounters with difference cannot be overstated. Whether they be social, cultural, racial, linguistic, geographic, or religious issues, talking about identity in a multitude of ways is in itself a particular way of identifying ourselves in a diverse Canadian context. The discourse of identity does revolve around the discourse of métissage; it also revolves around emergent theoretical discourses such as ecology and postmodernism. Although I do not want to detract from the metaphor of métissage, I want to briefly acknowledge the importance of ecological postmodern perspective when putting into question the mapping of identity in deliberate ways. Sumara, Davis & Laidlaw (2001) have identified this conceptual diversity of Canadian self-identification within the framework of a distinctly Canadian curriculum theory:

> In Canada, the moment one raises issues of identity, knowledge, and history – the subject matters of curriculum – one enters the realm of the contextually dependent, the negotiated, the compromised. Following a long history of learning to create a nation by stitching together geographies, climates, cultures, ethnicities, and languages, curriculum theorists in Canada seem to have learned that meanings and identities are not discovered, nor can they be fully represented (p. 12).

As postmodernism diminishes boundaries and embraces a shift away from modernist worldviews, it encourages ecological postmodernism in interdependent discourses of curriculum theory and development (Davis, Sumara & Luce-Kapler, 2000; Sumara, Davis & Laidlaw, 2001). In the evocative film *Mindwalk* (Lintschinger & Capra, 1991), there are several discussions surrounding ecological postmodernism (and systems theory): the notion of seeing the whole picture, of having a new or different vision of reality, of appreciating the (inter)connectedness in the world, "looking at the living system as a whole." In fact, the physicist passionately suggests that all environmental, social, psychological and biological phenomena are interdependent. So, too, do Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt (2002a, 2002b) in their purpose to describe the métissage of Canadian curriculum theory.

Focusing on educational contexts, what I see is a challenge of perception as well as addressing the need for better appreciating how identity and place impact upon teaching and learning. By exploring expressive forms of subjective experience, educational or otherwise, students and teachers can attempt to make sense of the worlds they inhabit. These worlds chart new territories of identity and difference, and challenge young and not-so-young learners to re-know the world. The hybrid practice of métissage, therefore, allows for narrative articulations that shift, re-contextualize, and affect representations of identity. By speaking about identity in the terms of métissage, teachers and students can seek, discover and share truth in a spirited pedagogical process of 'be-coming.'

My discussion merely skims the surface of métissage and difference, and does not map out a conclusive argument of being or becoming. Rather, it provides a new start of an existing conversation. And a curriculum of métissage is part of the ongoing conversation because it is a social process that involves the lives of learners studying their world of diversity and difference. If teachers are to create dialogues between and across different educational sites, then they will have to dare to merge curriculum documents, unofficial texts, and students' and their own identities. Despite opportunities for dialogue on provincial and local levels, however, research reveals that questions of diversity and difference remain problematic. In other words, "The problematic of difference and the very real struggle to reach across differences – cultural, racial, sexual, national, linguistic – or the refusal to try, leaves curriculum studies like a battlefield occupied and divided by intellectual camps" (Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt, 2002a, n.p.).

For me, métissage is both a conscious concept and a pedagogical practice that is particularly applicable to Francophones who live in-between languages, cultures, histories, and geographies. This is why I feel educators need more self-conscious Francophone curriculum development. A more insightful, meaningful and mindful curriculum of métissage would allow for rewriting, refiguring and situating knowledge of language, culture, geography, memory, and history in experiences and reflection on the tentative and ambiguous negotiations among hybrid Francophone spaces. While revealing the possibilities of a curriculum of métissage is useful in the (Francophone) Canadian school context, understanding curriculum and Canadian curriculum theory necessitates a closer look at the uniquely Canadian curriculum question 'Where is here?'.

Exploring 'Where is here?'

Two fundamental questions of identity in the Canadian context are: 'Who am I?' and 'Where is here?' (e.g. Atwood, 1972; Chambers, 1999; Norquay, 2000; Willinsky, 1998). In fact, Atwood (1972) begins her groundbreaking thematic guide to Canadian literature by posing the question "What, why, and where is here?" (p. 11) in the hopes of outlining key patterns to better understand Canada's national narrative. Borrowing from Northrop Frye's suggestion that, in Canada, the question 'Who am I?' begs another 'Where is here?', Atwood posits that the Canada in 'Canlit' has been a place in which Canadians find themselves lost because Canadian literature tells a different and unique story about the unknown territory of Canada, about 'here.' As Atwood (1972) explains,

> What a lost person needs is a map of the territory, with his own position marked on it so he can see where he is in relation to everything else. Literature is not only a mirror; it is also a map, a geography of the mind. Our literature is one such map, if we can learn to read it as *our* literature, as the product of who and where we have been. We need such a map desperately, we need to know about here, because here is where we live. For the members of a country or a culture, shared knowledge of their place, their here, is not a luxury but a necessity. Without that knowledge we will not survive (pp. 18-19).

In her work about Canada's literary landscape, Atwood (1972) looks to the notion of survival (e.g. physical, cultural, psychological) as the underpinnings of Canadian literature. Atwood's guide does not simply describe a literature that happened to be written in Canada, but emphasizes what writers wrote about 'here.'

In my search to the geoidentity question 'Where is here?', I look to curriculum theorists whose work on Canadian curriculum theory and identity helps me delve deeper into the complex world of place and identity. Also borrowing from Northrop Frye's suggestion of reframing the identity question, Canadian curriculum theorists (e.g. Chambers, 1999; Norquay, 2000; Sumara, Davis & Laidlaw, 2001; Willinsky, 1998) draw particular attention to the notion of home in the process of curriculum making, understanding and theorizing.

For Norquay (2000), the question 'Where is here?' necessitates the additional question 'Where are you from?' because it is this second question that problematizes 'country of origin' and challenges assumptions and dominant understandings of who is Canadian. Family stories and histories about 'country of origin' reflect lived experience about belonging and being/becoming Canadian and, while some students' experiences reveal that their identities are assumed and taken for granted (e.g. being White-Anglo Canadian, belonging 'here'), others are sought with ongoing struggle and conscious effort (Norquay, 2000, pp. 9-12). Because some Canadian youth do not necessarily frame their identity in terms of race, ethnicity or nationality, Willinsky (1998) suggests that the question 'Where is here?' must be reconsidered by teachers and students alike. His concern lies with the responsibility schools have to help young people better understand "who belongs where" in a world of profound divisions. As Willinsky (1998) writes,

> 'Where is here?'...does have a way of linking our various histories as indigenes, colonials, immigrants, expatriates, tourists, citizens, refugees, and displaced persons. It is easy to see that many of the disputes that threaten the future of

> Canada, as well as those that concern broader questions of national identity, are about the nature of 'here' (p. 9).

When I think about Francophones occupying a vast Canadian space, especially those outside the distinctly Francophone place known as 'French Canada' ('here'), I wonder about taken-for-granted notions of who is French Canadian in Western Canada ('there') and who counts as Franco-Albertan (neither 'here' nor 'there').[16] As mentioned in the first section, being Francophone outside Québec, or an official linguistic minority, is an identity that is often questioned and needs further explanation. As Norquay (2000) writes, "For White-Anglo Canadians, identity is not troubled by the signification of 'here' as opposed to 'there'; their Canadian identity is for the claiming, and belonging is a given" (p. 9). For Franco-Albertans, a sense of Francophone identity can be doubly problematic: on the one hand, having 'French Canadian' roots in Alberta is often challenged and requires concerted effort and ongoing support (e.g. through the Francophone school system); and on the other, French Alberta has historically 'belonged' to White (Catholic) French Canadians. For Willinsky (1998), then, it becomes imperative that young people learn that self-identifications carry stories of difference, borders and boundaries, struggle and domination (p. 1). Consequently, (Francophone) schools need to reconsider the interplay of race, ethnicity and nationality although Canadian identity politics is "not necessarily everyone's affair" (p. 8).

---

[16] Francophones in Alberta are inevitably confronted with mixed messages of 'here' in relation to 'there' and vice versa. Fine (1994) reminds me that neither 'here' nor 'there' can be defined in terms of exclusivity or dichotomy, but rather in terms of the "in-between" – where the blurred borders will reveal that investigating what is truly 'between' is more crucial. Therefore, when researching the lived experiences of Francophones in Alberta, our individual and collective answers to 'Where is here?' will be situated in an evershifting 'here' and 'there' and, of course, somewhere in-between.

If curricular relations about self and community involve the geoidentity question 'Where is here?', then it is important to present a brief rationale for Canadian curriculum that should integrate a true sense of place and Canadian consciousness with current curriculum and its theory. Chambers (1999) takes the representation of a distinct Canadian consciousness in curriculum and curriculum theory seriously. She relies heavily on Canadian literature for her analysis because curriculum guides and school materials have not reflected, and still do not reflect, Canadians and their relationship to what it means to be Canadian in various parts of our vast country. Indeed, she looks to Canadian novelists such as Northrop Frye, Robert Kroetsch, and Margaret Atwood to explain the interplay between the who and the where of Canada. As Chambers (1999) argues, identity and place are inextricably linked. The where must be clearly defined and "fully known" in order to answer the revealing question of the who. In Chambers' (1999) words, "Posing the question 'Where is here?' implies a preoccupation with where we are in relation to other places" (p. 137). As both Chambers (1999) and the Canadian literary tradition illustrate, Canadians and their identities are undeniably shaped by their geographies. The geographic context of teaching, learning and identity is, therefore, relevant to the context of curriculum discourses.

Chambers (1999) offers recollections of different Canadian authors to emphasize the literary interest in the Canadian landscape, but also to highlight their experiences of absent topos as described in their school curriculum and existing body of literature during their respective childhoods. In other words, Chambers (1999) draws a parallel between distinctly Canadian speculative fiction and curriculum theorizing in Canada. The literary authors' use of setting and themes continues to show a commitment to Canada as a place and 'Alienated Outsider' as an identity. In their works, "Canadian speculative fiction writers speculate about how humans are shaped by their environment and the effects, both manifest and potential, of ignoring the intimacy of this relationship" (Chambers, 1999, p. 139). Simply put, writers must not silence the landscape of Canada (e.g. social, political, geophysical, and imaginary). In general, writers must continue to explore the themes of survival and alienation within the Canadian landscape in all of its forms. In particular, Canadian curriculum theorists must render visible and worthy of knowing curriculum languages and genres that name the multi-faceted Canadian landscape of yesterday, today, and tomorrow (Chambers, 1999). Being aware and mindful of place and identity, then, can help teachers explore and appreciate the intimate connections between autobiography and geography and curriculum (Hurren, 2003, p. 120). As Hurren (2003) explains, "in telling about myself I am telling something about my place, and in telling about my place I am telling about myself, and curriculum is the medium that creates the spaces for the telling" (p. 120).

Providing a map to Canadian curriculum – and to ourselves

What Chambers (1999), Norquay (2000), Sumara, Davis & Laidlaw (2001) and Willinsky (1998) all share is their attempt to explain the interplay between the who and the where of Canada. In doing so, Canadian curriculum theorists reveal their fascination with projects that illustrate the usually invisible relations among the representations of the objects, personalities, or content of their inquiries (Sumara, Davis & Laidlaw, 2001, p. 150). Upon re-reading work by Canadian curriculum theorists (e.g. Chambers, 1999; Dion 2004; Haig-Brown, 1995; Sumara & Davis, 1999), the question for me is no longer

'What is my identity?'; rather, the more appropriate question becomes 'Where is my identity?' because it seems more self-conscious about the relationships I experience between and among learning, teaching, curriculum, knowledge and identity. I question with Grumet (1995) and Chambers (1999) the importance of the relationship between human identity and community. While Grumet's assertions pertain to the connections between education systems and lived educational experience, Chambers (1999) explores the complex relationship between Canada as a place and Canada's curriculum theory. For Chambers, invisibility is not merely poignant; it can be "dangerous" because, without acknowledging and knowing Canada – as a place, Canadians continue to be blinded by Anglo-American and/or French-English colonial discourses. Chambers (1999) describes the poignancy of such survival in terms of Canadian curriculum and theory: "As Canadians, we may not recognize our own literature, land, and history, our uniqueness – our own curriculum and its theory – even when we are living in the midst of it" (p. 140). Canadian literature can meaningfully describe Canadian consciousness and landscape, but the significance of a distinctly Canadian curriculum and theory cannot be overstated. In fact, I would argue that Canadian curriculum *should* be the map which incorporates Canada's geophysical, socio-political and imaginative elements in complex learning relationships to guide young and old alike to Canadian ways of being and acting.

Although current curricular content includes more accurate reflections of the ways in which the Canadian landscape shapes student learning, knowing, and 'seeing', Canadian curriculum theory does not. As Chambers (1999) states:

> Although there is more home-grown curricula in all Canadian provinces and territories than in the past, when they read and try to apply curriculum theory to practice, Canadian educators and students have a harder time seeing themselves

and the place where they live than they ought to (p. 142).

Despite Sheehan's (1979a, 1979b) and Tomkins' (1986, 1979) historical interpretations of Canadian curriculum, a real space and a uniquely Canadian place in a postcolonial era must be created to (re-)shape Canadian curriculum discourse on theory and identity. Curriculum cannot be dealt with objectively or divorced from the experience of the Canadian landscape. Moreover, various contemporary Canadian literary voices have made explicit "the place of survival, as a topos filled with life worth living and at certain times worth talking and writing about" (Chambers, 1999, p. 143). Just as Greene (1997) gives meaning to the process of creating curriculum in terms of one's own consciousness, so too does Chambers (1999). In the case of a Canadian consciousness, it is clear that Canadians "need a form of curriculum theorizing grounded in 'here', which maps out the territory of who we are in relation to the topography of where we live" (Chambers, 1999, p. 144). Therefore, modes of consciousness must be clearly defined and understood if Canadian curriculum theorists are to discover and create new curriculum languages and genres reflecting the landscape that is Canada.

There is a kind of resemblance between the curricular conceptions of Chambers (1999), Greene (1997), and Grumet (1995). All three view curriculum as essential to the intimate quest for meaning if it is connected to the learner and adapted to personal sense-making in an increasingly changing world. In Chambers' words (1999),

> The single most important task for Canadian curriculum theorists may be to search within the physical and imaginary landscape of Canada for the tools we need to see our home, to help us understand how we have come to be "out of place" in this home, and how we can finally come home here (p. 147).

As Greene (1997) describes the frequency of sense-making in a disorderly world, "The desire, indeed the *need*, for orientation is equivalent to the desire to constitute meanings, all sorts of meanings, in the many dimensions of existence" (p. 146). One critical dimension to all Canadians in their search for meaning is the particular place of Canadian landscape in their lives. Finally, as Grumet (1995) points out, "Curriculum is the act of making sense of these things and that requires understanding the ways that they do and do not stand for our experience" (pp. 19-20). If knowledge represents a "social project" which is done "in common with other people" (p. 19), then the understanding of and appreciation for the geophysical, imaginary, literary and socio-political landscape that is Canada must be evident in Canadian curriculum theorizing and writing.

Understanding the literary landscape of curriculum inquiry

The sharing of visions and voices through literary texts and social cultures can explore issues of history, memory, language, and geography. They can also ultimately explore issues of identity. Sumara (2002b) and Salvio (1998) both discuss how the same work of fiction, *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels (1996), can be used for different purposes in curriculum inquiry. While their approaches to literary text and engagement differ, both authors provide useful frameworks that create opportunities for ongoing interpretation of personal memories, collective histories and complex identities.

On the one hand, Sumara's piece represents an attempt to create new methods and genres of reporting in curriculum theory. The development of literary anthropology can inform philosophical inquiry in general and reading-response methods in particular. More importantly, ongoing literary identifications and re-interpretations can elaborate upon and, in turn, develop useful insights into the complexity of the interpretive text and beyond. As Sumara (2002b) points out, "For me, the pleasures and problems of literary identification are necessary reminders that lived experiences are contingent upon the circumstances that organize such experiences" (p. 77). Thus, it is important to interpret a relationship between the text and the reader, the reader's identifications with the text and with other texts, and the reader's own experiences and those of significant others (e.g. parents). In discussing the importance of seeking deeper understanding between works of literary art and language, culture and history in general, Sumara (2002b) explains, "This literary commonplace [philosophical engagement with literary text] continues to help create a needed relationship between history and memory and, in particular, between the world of my generation and the world of my parents' generation" (p. 78). In each circumstance of engagement, the reader must interpret the text of literary fiction as well as re-interpret the dynamic relationship between one's own history and memory, language and geography. The central aim is not to hone anthropological reading-response skills, but rather to engage and bear witness to the unfolding multi-faceted relationship that influences the reader's ensuing visions and voices.

On the other hand, Salvio's piece describes an attempt to represent melancholic, embodied and lived memories in insightful ways that might inform new approaches to reflecting upon teaching and learning. In reference to Anne Michaels' novel *Fugitive Pieces* (1996), Salvio (1998) writes of two characters whose histories and stories are melancholic, yet memorable, that is, rich in embodied memories and worth remembering: "If we case Jakob and Athos as melancholic scholars, we might read their story as a drama about the desire and urgency not only to excavate memories, but to learn how to hold them" (p. 16). In other words, melancholia as a descriptive approach to teaching and learning entails the vulnerable work of remembering in distinct ways. Human beings such as the novel's characters must attempt to incorporate feelings of loss in their memories because they do not, and cannot, necessarily recognize that loss is experienced both in their lives and their memories. As Salvio (1998) illustrates:

> Our bodies remember. We hold the memories of those we have lost or long for in our joints, our dreams, and our gestures. While we may not be consciously aware of memory's presence, memories do take occupancy in our daily lives; they fuse our intentions, our desires and our social values and we inherit fragments of memories held by those before us (p. 17).

Whether suffering from loss or longing, remembering takes work. Human beings in relation with others are compelled to interpret their memories in an effort to make sense of their identity. Although the contemplation may be "painful" (p. 18), lamenting the loss of loved ones or personal objects may provide feelings of hopefulness. After all, what is experienced biologically (e.g. embodied memories), but not necessarily brought to consciousness (e.g. memory's presence), can still be incredibly powerful. In Salvio's (1998) words, two characters in a loving relationship of remembering can teach readers the intricate acts and intellectual rewards of memory work:

> The love between Jakob and Michaela serves as a pedagogic trope that teaches us to remember in very specific ways. This love urges us to infuse history with our own subjectivity. Our personal memories are a means through which we can, in fact, defy, alter or re-write histories that are devoid of the details left by those we have lost – the smell of their hair, the way they move through a room or hold their cup of morning coffee. [...] By bringing the words *history* and *memory* together to form the term *historical memory*, I believe can perform the deed of answerability (p. 18).

Historical narratives can provide a powerful bridge between one's personal project to live and the intellectual work required to remember more or less consciously. Melancholia, therefore, can provide a theoretical framework to organize curriculum thinking and personal reflecting on issues surrounding teaching and learning.

The importance of sharing visions and voices in literary texts lies in the interpretation and representation of identity. In novels and stories, identity is never fixed, but fluid and even contradictory. Looking through the lens of poststructuralism, 'I' embraces plurality, a blurring of meaning(s), a revealing of multiple subject-positions. And language, which is inextricably connected to constructs of culture, significantly influences the construction process of becoming subjects. For Belsey (2002), "We are born human beings, in that we are the offspring of two human parents; we become subjects as a result of cultural construction and what culture represses, namely, the lost but inextricable real" (p. 67). In other words, 'I' is not simply about the fixed binary oppositions of universal/particular, mind/body, subject/organism, Anglophone/ Francophone, and so on. Instead, the poststructuralist 'I' is about difference (e.g. the English and French languages dividing the world up differently), precisely because 'I' cannot know with certainty one's perception of differences, languages, cultures, and so on. What poststructuralism offers to the discussion of the 'subject' as an "effect of culture" is that "subjectivity is more likely to reproduce the uncertainties and the range of beliefs we encounter than resolve them" (Belsey, 2002, p. 72). Therefore, the poststructural alternative to difference is to understand more fully the relationship between subject and culture and borrowed meanings and perceived ones, in an effort to become (more) conscious of the transformative sense-making process that inhabits our bodies, memories and lives. In explaining the importance of seeking deeper understanding of the novel *Fugitive Pieces* and its characters' process of (personal and ancestral) transformation, Sumara (2002b) writes,

> Like the novelist herself, altered through the process of creating lives for characters to which she becomes attached, the characters of this novel are engaged in the ongoing work of inventing identities for themselves. It is the process of creating interpreted relationships among remembered, currently perceived, and imagined pieces that organizes the experience of self identity (p. 77).

So, incidentally, does the process of revealing different subject-positions differently. What is in question is one's personal project to understand and appreciate the dynamic juxtaposition of embodied, remembered, perceived, imagined and re-invented pieces of 'I'. The demanding yet compelling work to remember, as argued by Sumara (2002b) and Salvio (1998), offers insightful ways that contribute to the discourse of curriculum, teaching and learning by exploring the interconnectedness of historical memory, language, and geography. By questioning the uncertainty in the finality of knowing and being, both authors provide useful frameworks to approach representations of curriculum and inform the crucial memory work that shapes identity.

Answering the in-dwelling call

While I am reminded that curricular relations are always nestled within a complex context of who we are (becoming) and where we are (e.g. Norquay, 2000; Salvio, 1998; Sumara, 2002; Willinsky, 1998), the work of Aoki (1991a), Salvio (1999), Taubmann (2000), Boler (1999) and Boler & Zembylas (2003) made me suspicious of my work and responsibility as a teacher in the Francophone school system in Alberta. Administrators, curriculum developers and colleagues increasingly look to me for solutions to 'problems' of difference and diversity: to give workshops on how to teach globalization and openness to others; to develop bilingual resource materials on diversity and inclusion; to help create an inclusive school community that welcomes others without alienating (Franco-)Albertans. I feel a certain awkwardness because the requests often assume quick fixes. Moreover, I feel tension – emotional, intellectual, sociocultural tension – a certain degree of dissonance between educational practices and personal beliefs about teaching, learning and identity in a Francophone context in Alberta.

Aoki (1991a) reminds me that to be in tension is to be alive and that the tensionality teachers experience should be appropriated positively (p. 183). For example, the ongoing stress I feel as teacher regarding students who belong and those who don't (for reasons of class, gender, race, language (in)abilities, culture) should not be dimished or eliminated. I should not strive towards tensionless teaching practice, but rather I, as a Francophone teacher and curriculum worker interested in seeking different experiences and forms of belonging, should embrace embodied thinking and knowing – what Aoki calls "embodied tensionality" (p. 183). As I 'teach' and 'educate', I am called upon to dwell in my students' lived experiences and my own. Although my school district (like most others) would be satisfied in knowing that I am attuned to my students' experiences and, in turn, to their needs, desires, concerns, they would more likely be relieved in knowing of their 'success' in learning, in being normal (Francophones), in fitting in. Yet few administrators, curriculum developers or teaching colleagues mention their needs, desires, concerns for 'implementing' a curriculum of inclusion.

Over the years I have reconsidered my attunement to curriculum, Francophone or otherwise. I am reminded of Salvio's (1999) interpretation of narrative cures, the stories and educational discourses that seek cures for problems such as difference. My school district, like so many across Canada, which seek to 'cure' and 'treat' differences, further influence discourses of disease and recovery because curing narratives "invoke a cultural desire for an imaginary 'ending' to the problems we face as educators, an ending akin to a narrative of closure" (Salvio, 1999, p. 185). Reading beyond students' (and teachers') differences or deficiencies requires a desire of a different sort: a desire to uncover our own limitations and anxieties vis-à-vis those who are dependent on us, rather than to foresee the symptoms and diagnoses of "educational secrets." In this sense, the discourses of inclusion, difference, multicultural citizenship education, and pluralism should not be prescriptive but interactive – interacting with a more complex and mysterious place. In Salvio's (1999) words, "To invoke darkness into pedagogy in a society to the suppression of all phenomenological depth, is to attempt to recuperate an immediate connection between body and space, the unconscious and its habitat and the ways in which the past persistently haunts the present" (p. 187).

I sought the work of Taubman (2000) to better understand Salvio's (1999) interpretation of, what I am calling, a pedagogy of darkness or a pedagogy of the present. It is noteworthy that Taubman (2000) advocates a pedagogy of "the here and now" in an attempt to make meaning of discourses of 'hope' and 'fantasy.' He argues that educators should consider giving up hope because our desire to 'cure' and 'control' may prevent us from thinking more deeply about the relationships between teaching and learning and ultimately keep us from admitting who we are becoming (p. 25). As he puts it, "In all of these practices, hope, the desire for cure and the desire to control are surrendered in favor of attention to what is happening in the here and now, *how* one makes meaning of this, and the emotional truth of the situation" (p. 30). Therefore, be mindful of what we bring to our teaching (i.e. our desire, hope, fantasy to 'cure' or 'rescue' others) and focus on the here and now (rather than the 'not-yet') because a discourse of hope is misleading and deceiving. For Taubman (2000), educators must free themselves from the imprisoning 'ideology of hope':

> If one were to give up hope and the striving for control and cure, a space might open up in which one could more closely hear or sense what was happening in a classroom or in one's teaching or in one's own life. One could live in the problems one saw and by living in them, find ways to live through them, ask oneself how one relates to these problems, find new questions that may solve old problems (p. 31).

If teachers and students live in schools, then reflecting on and writing about the emotional experiences of letting go, sitting with pain, feeling, struggling, rethinking, remaining open, and so on, would represent a beginning to acting ethically (Taubman, 2000, p. 31).

Considering the 'dis-ease' I seem to cause in my school district and in Alberta's Francophone communities when discussing the problems and possibilities of Francophone education here, and the range of emotions I feel (from anger to passion to disappointment to guilt) when I am asked to provide quick solutions to 'problems' of difference, I wonder about my ongoing resistance. While I seem to be incessantly questioning the imposition of a single, fixed Franco-Albertan identity, reading Boler (1999) and Boler & Zembylas (2003) has helped me engage in a new way of seeing emotions – not only as a "mode of resistance" (1999, p. xviii), but also as a "pedagogy of discomfort" (2003, p. 111). Boler (1999) defines emotions as "a medium, a space in which differences and ethics are communicated, negotiated, and shaped" (p. 21).

Teachers' and students' emotions and emotional experiences, rather than be disciplined and discounted, should be reconsidered in order to "envision future horizons of possibilities and who we want to become" (p. xviii). While attempting to understand difference may be discomforting, critical inquiry at an emotional level is imperative if we are to embrace the ambiguity necessary to rethink identities and reconstruct our own common sense beliefs, values and assumptions about difference (Boler & Zembylas, 2003, pp. 111-117). For Boler & Zembylas (2003), then, educators (along with their students) are called to "exercise their ethical responsibilities" (p. 135) and engage in the emotional terrain of understanding difference, identity, and competing worldviews (p. 111).

While Salvio (1999) demystifies the meaning of darkness, Taubman (2000) the meaning of hope and Boler (1999) and Boler & Zembylas (2003) the meaning of emotions, Aoki (1991a) alerts me to the thoughtful possibility of "in-dwelling" in the teacher-student horizon of sound and silence. As narrative cures, perpetual fantasies and conceptions of difference direct curriculum workers and teachers towards perceptions of 'risk' and 'recovery', 'rescue' and 'control,' and 'common sense' and 'tolerance,' narrative sounds reveal our "caughtness in our own creation" of oneness. Put another way, tensionality between 'curriculum-as-planned' and 'curriculum-as-lived' should be polyphonic rather than harmonic. As Aoki (1991a) ponders,

> Could it be that such an understanding allows us to let go of our inclination to be totalistic, harmonic wholeness and to open us to the threshold of a space which, like a frontier, acknowledges both the limits of the *is* and the openness to the stirrings of sounds yet silent? (p. 186).

As I continue on my path of embodied tensionality, I wonder: is the francophonie in Alberta my frontier?

Coming home: Lingering reflections in response to the call to "in-dwell"

In my search for an understanding of curriculum, I am drawn by the works and words of Canadian curriculum theorists. Various authors describe that the meaning(s) of curriculum is(are) in the details and, as such, curriculum workers and teachers are called to pay attention to the particular. The 'particular' can, of course, be disruptive because it moves the centre or allows for multiple centres. For example, a "polyphonic curriculum" (Aoki, 191, p. 187), a curriculum of métissage (Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt, 2002b), an "education for reflectiveness" (Greene, 1991, p. 112), a curriculum as personal sense-making (Grumet, 1995, pp. 19-20), a pedagogy of "the here and now" (Taubmann, 2000, p. 26), a "pedagogy of discomfort" (Boler & Zembylas, 2003, p. 111), and a process of "learning from" coupled with the responsibility to "(re)tell" (Dion, 2004, pp. 59-60) – are not, and cannot be, prescriptive or categorical. Rather, these individual and collective ways of marking lived experience in the world embrace the particularities, complexities, multiplicities, contingencies, ambiguities and relationalities of the world. In this sense, the search for curriculum is relentless if we are to "find new meaning" in emerging curriculum discourses.

Canadian curriculum theorists, such as Chambers (1999), Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt (2002a), Dion (2004), Hurren (2003), Sumara (2002b) to name a few, dive into the muddy logic of Canadian curriculum development from a social, political, historical, geographical, autobiographical and critical perspective. What I hoped to highlight during the analysis of this curriculum section was the ambiguity in the recurring Canadian literary themes of marginalization, survival, and environment, and reveal what really matters – a sense of place that Canadians can call home. What I discovered, in undertaking this interpretation of curriculum, was a revelatory picture of my own sense of place – as a teacher, a curriculum worker, a *Franco-Canadienne*, as an "in-dweller." In fact, it is primarily Canadian curriculum theorists who have introduced me to a new and refreshing way to understand curriculum, teaching, and learning – as a contextualized topography about the world, the self, and the other (e.g. Chambers, 1999). Such is the goal of learning what is integral to coming home – to ourselves.

CHAPTER 4

CURRICULUM THEORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Two or three things I know for sure, and one of them is the way you can both hate and love something you are not sure you understand.

– Dorothy Allison (1996, p. 7)

"There is no use trying," said Alice; "one can't believe impossible things."

"I dare say you haven't had much practice," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I always did it for half an hour a day. Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

– Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland* (1865)

Sous l'oeil de Dieu, près du fleuve géant,
Le Canadien grandit en espérant.
Il est né d'une race fière,
Béni fut son berceau;
Le ciel a marqué sa carrière
Dans ce monde nouveau.
Toujours guidé par sa lumière,
Il gardera l'honneur de son drapeau.

– *O Canada, terre de nos aïeux*
(Paroles d'Adolphe-Basile Routhier
et musique de Calixa Lavallée, 1880)

Social studies and citizenship education

This next curriculum section will deal with social studies education for two main reasons. On the one hand, my research project involves Francophone identity in the face of accelerating ethno-cultural, religious and linguistic pluralism in both Canadian and Albertan contexts, which necessitates situating questions of citizenship education in plural societies. On the other, studying the lived experience of Francophone youth in Alberta involves particular social studies issues around Canadian national identity and social cohesion, which have been a constant focus of the discipline in (English) Canada (e.g. Clark, 2004; Richardson, 2002b; Sears, 1997).

My review of social studies literature will not be exhaustive; rather, it will highlight historical and contemporary perspectives of the field of social studies in a North American context, especially with regards to the interrelated questions of citizenship and identity and unity and diversity. First, I will discuss different definitions of social studies followed by examining contending purposes and goals depending on the jurisdiction or perspective taken. After reviewing definitions, purposes and curriculum initiatives in various contexts, I will examine current developments in social studies education. While it is important to review the latest trends in the social studies field, it will become clear that such developments represent ongoing debates in the United States and Canada that reflect a renewed interest in citizenship, the place of history teaching in social studies, and the concern for how social studies "produces" national identity in a changing society. In view of my research project and in response to the developments in social studies, I will focus on the implications of revisioning social studies education in a plural society and increasingly diverse Francophone school communities. Specific references will be made to social studies initiatives in Alberta to better understand the context of my qualitative research study.

Defining the social studies

Generally speaking, defining the social studies has been – and still is – regarded as difficult, even controversial, for three primary reasons. First, social studies as a subject area has always been, and continues to be, highly contentious. This is partly because social studies, unlike other disciplines[17] or subject areas, has struggled with what it is (or what they are). In fact, there has not been agreement over whether or not the term "social studies" is singular or plural (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977, p. 1; Nelson, 2001, p. 16). Simply put, social studies has always undergone an "identity crisis" of its own. For example, Shields & Ramsay (2004) argue that social studies education is "in some ways, in a state of crisis" (p. 39). It is interesting to note that, almost 30 years earlier, the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) stated that "social studies has an identity crisis" (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977, p. iii). Stanley (2001) concludes that the social studies "remains a field in search of an identity" (p. 1).

Second, confusion also arises in the field of social studies because no single, consistent definition of social studies exists (Nelson, 2001; Shields & Ramsay, 2004). It is important to note that the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the largest professional organization devoted to social studies education in North America and boasting 26,000 members, defines social studies as "the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence" (NCSS, 2005). Although the NCSS succinctly describes the social studies, the same cannot be said for Canada. There does not exist a Canadian national professional association engaged in supporting educators by advocating social studies. Education falls under provincial jurisdiction in Canada, and not all provinces advocate for social studies, but rather for academic disciplines such as history and geography (Lévesque, 2004; Osborne, 2004; Sears, 1997; Shields & Ramsay, 2004). For example, in Alberta,[18] the definition of social studies suggests an interdisciplinary study of social knowledge: "Social studies is the study of people in relation to each other and to their world. It is an issues-based interdisciplinary subject that draws upon history, geography, ecology, economics, law, philosophy, political science and other social science disciplines" (Alberta Learning, 2003, p. 1). In Manitoba, however, the definition of social studies stresses the importance of history and geography, considering these "disciplines" as central to social studies learning: "Social studies is the study of people in relation to each other and to the world in which they live. In Manitoba, social studies comprises the disciplines of history and geography, draws upon the social sciences, and integrates relevant content from the humanities" (Manitoba Education, 2005, p. 3). Furthermore, the Ministère de l'Éducation of Québec (2004), while it favours a disciplines approach, makes citizenship education a priority in both geography and history: “Le domaine de l’univers social comprend le programme de géographie et le programme d’histoire et éducation à la citoyenneté. Dans le domaine de l’univers social, l’élève est amené à [...] construire sa conscience citoyenne à l’échelle planétaire et à l’aide de l’histoire” (p. 13). Even among the three provinces noted above, defining the social studies depends on how different jurisdictions view the singularity or plurality of the social studies field and the extent to which social knowledge is to be integrated or hierarchical according to certain disciplines. It is not surprising that the lack of consensus over what the social studies is (are) represents an ongoing debate.[19]

---

[17] Nelson (2001) argues that social studies is, and should be considered, a "discipline." Recognizing that knowledge is a social construct and that definitions of the social studies are influenced by social and ideological contexts, he points out: "The claim that history is superior on some grounds of disciplinary knowledge is simply academic imperialism, not the result of intellectual examination" (p. 25). While humanities, social sciences, history(ies), and social studies are interdependent, he explains, it can be useful to distinguish among fields of study in order to provide or develop clear explanations of certain ideas or phenomena, but not to make a "hierarchy of disciplines" or constrain thinking by saying that one of the social and humanities fields of study is not a discipline (p. 25).

---

[18] Given space constraints, I have selected three provinces as examples: Alberta, the province in which the research study is taking place; Manitoba, another province in Western Canada, but having a strong Francophone community - past, present and future; and Québec, otherwise known as "French Canada," but whose history and curriculum history have influenced curricular conceptions of teaching, learning, and identity in Francophone contexts outside Québec such as Alberta.

Third, the social studies is a particularly ambiguous subject area because it is inextricably linked to values and belief systems and ideas of what makes a “good” citizen. And what is meant by a “good” citizen is not only contentious, but highly contested. Citizenship is a word that “is intensely value laden, embodying a set of ideals that represent what citizens ought to be and how they ought to live in order to enjoy the rights of citizenship” (Osborne, 1997, p. 39). To be a citizen, then, is to be a “good citizen” – one that is defined and constructed by dominant ideologies of the day. While all Canadian provinces agree that the main goal of social studies – and public education – is the preparation for democratic citizenship, differing views abound regarding what should be taught as social studies, how it should be taught, and about the very purpose of schools (Gibson, 2004). In Manitoba, for example, the Ministry of Education defines the role of the social studies teacher and offers a cautionary note regarding the influence of the teacher's personal beliefs and convictions in the presentation of social studies content and teaching strategies. While the Manitoba Social Studies Framework renders "complete neutrality" as "not as always possible" in the classroom context, it does state that "teachers need to be aware of the implications of presenting their own beliefs and perspectives as fact rather than opinion" (Manitoba Education, 2005, p. 6). While no such description appears in the new Alberta Program of Studies, it does include a short piece on the use of controversial issues, which "should be used by the teacher to promote critical inquiry rather than advocacy and to teach students how to think rather than what to think" (Alberta Learning, 2003, p. 6). If various jurisdictions feel compelled to set parameters around the teacher's role in the social studies classroom, then it indicates to some extent the ambiguous and controversial nature of the subject area.

---

[19] Such a lack of consensus vis-à-vis an already broad-based conception of social studies renders the field more vulnerable or “unusually prone” to continued (political) debate, fragmentation and redefinition, although such definitional debates are seen to be beneficial to the importance and vitality of the field (Nelson, 2001, p. 15; Ross, 2001a, p. 4; Stanley, 2001, pp. 1-2).

Furthermore, citizenship is a complex concept. Perhaps what contributes most to the lack of any real consensus on (good) citizenship is that the concept is a normative one. As Sears (2004) points out, citizenship is an internally complex concept: "The idea of contested concepts is rooted in the premise that there are some concepts inevitably mired in continual disputes about their proper use" (p. 93). Sure, the internal complexity of citizenship as a concept encourages a host of understandings, especially given the role – and responsibility – social studies has in preparing for effective citizenship. However, it is crucial to recognize the underlying assumptions and values that make for genuine disagreements. Normative concepts, as Sears (2004) explains, "are, in fact, appraisive in that they involve making judgements about what is better and best. Those who speak of educating for citizenship are not so much concerned with the narrow legal definition of citizenship as with some normative sense of good citizenship"

(p. 93). Perhaps this is why various jurisdictions are obligated to define not only the social studies, but the role of social studies teachers as well.

Therefore, defining the social studies remains an arduous task because of the subject area's contentious, inconsistent and ambiguous nature. Shields & Ramsay (2004) compare characterizing social studies education across English Canada "as complex and challenging as trying to capture the essence of what it means to be a Canadian" (p. 38). Writing about the "seamless web of social studies" for the NCSS, Barr, Barth & Shermis (1977) point out that the field of social studies "is so caught up in ambiguity, inconsistency, and contradiction that it represents a complex educational enigma" (p. 1). Indeed, the fact that social studies has defied any final definition remains a pedagogical puzzle.

Revisiting the purposes and goals of social studies education

As mentioned above, situating the purposes and goals of social studies education has never been an easy feat because the field of social studies has yet to have a definitive definition. To better understand the "educational enigma" of social studies it is important to review historical and contemporary perspectives on the traditions, purposes and goals of social studies education. Also, a closer examination of different provinces' contending points of view on the purposes and goals of social studies is necessary to consider the ongoing debates in Canadian social studies and to better situate Alberta in this political and curricular context.

i) Reconsidering historical perspectives of social studies purposes and goals in the Canadian context

Historically, the notion of social studies is American in origin, rooted in the progressive movement of the early 20th century, with John Dewey as its prime proponent. Dewey advocated for an active model of schooling that engaged students in child-centred, issues-based activities of an interdisciplinary nature (Clark, 2004). While Dewey is recognized for laying the foundation of social studies education in the United States, the 1916 National Education Association Committee on the Social Studies produced an influential report that set the basis for social studies in the U.S. and Canada. Interestingly, the members of the Committee, although scholars, were not subject matter specialists; thus, their preoccupation did not lie in content decisions, but rather in defining the goal of public education followed by the role of social studies curriculum in order to achieve that goal, and ultimately using citizenship as the primary criterion for selecting content from a variety of academic disciplines (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977, p. 25). As a result, the central aim of the social studies became the production of "good citizens" – a social-educational preparation that emphasized skills and attitudes instead of factual knowledge (p. 25). Not surprisingly, the place of disciplines, history in particular, and of academic rigour and structure, content over skills development in particular, remain continuing debates in the field of social studies.

Social studies in "English Canada" has not been immune to such debates regarding the very notion that makes up the dynamic school subject. In fact, it has been strongly influenced by developments in the United States, from the creation of textbooks and curriculum documents to curriculum approaches in elementary, secondary and teacher education classrooms (Clark, 2004). While social studies is "an American invention," it is important to acknowledge the influence of Great Britain on social studies in “English Canada,” especially in the realm of textbooks and other materials. The idea of allegiance to Great Britain and the British Empire was generally promoted in curriculum materials. Attitudes towards Britain and about British patriotism sought “to create an intellectual and social milieu that encouraged and promoted a sense of Canadian citizenship that was wrapped up in an enveloping allegiance to Great Britain and its empire, and the ideals for which it stood” (Clark, 2004, p. 20). Concerns about a predominantly American cultural influence are generally cited as English Canada’s response to American ideas on Canadian (social studies) curriculum (Clark, 2004; Tomkins, 1986).

Social studies in “French Canada”, on the other hand, has been influenced by developments in both “English Canada” and the United States; however, the greatest influence was that of the Catholic Church until the creation of the first Ministry of Education in 1964. Unlike Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba which adopted social studies in the 1930s respectively, Québec – in keeping with French European traditions – has only recently adopted social studies as an elementary subject (Lévesque, 2004, p. 56). While Québec is returning to an even greater emphasis on history and geography, rather than an integrated social studies approach, it is also making citizenship education a high priority. Not only will Québec students be taking separate courses in history, geography, *and* citizenship from Grades 3 to 10, but “officially making citizenship education one of its educational priorities throughout the entire public school system [is] a first for Canada” (Lévesque, 2004, p. 67). To appreciate the scope of such educational reform, one must understand that social education from 1867 until the 1960s relied heavily on the Catholic Church for governance. Given the religious nature of the Québec educational system, religion was far more important as a social-educational institution than "social studies" curriculum. To put it more accurately, the Church was the curriculum: teaching moral and patriotic values was the primary focus of "history" and "geography."[20] As Lévesque (2004) writes,

> This nation-building approach to history and geography was very much focused on the survival of the French Canadian nationality and the clerical ideologies that made this 'église-nation' unique in Canada. English Canada was treated as a separate imperialist nation, with a different language, culture, and religion (p. 58).

Such a strong religious and nationalistic emphasis of a French-Canadian and Catholic nation suggests that, when it would come time to "catch up" with English Canadian and American social studies initiatives, Québec would undergo unprecedented educational reform from the 1960s to the 1990s in order to "modernize" their national-religious society.

Although history and geography remain the dominant disciplines in teaching and learning about the social realities of the world, the two subjects were redefined during three decades of "nationalism" – both in "English Canada" and "French Canada." For example, the Canadian publication, *What Culture? What Heritage?* (Hodgetts, 1968), was one response in light of growing concerns about American cultural domination and loss of (English) Canadian identity. In Québec, *Le Rapport Parent* of 1964 put forth the idea of standardizing Québec history programs to bridge the gap between English-

---

[20] "You mean there's more?", my mother asks me jokingly in English, as she rhymes off names of French Canadian heroes and ancestors. An ongoing conversation with my French-Canadian mother, who is not from Québec, helps me appreciate the "rigid inculcation of religious, moral, and patriotic beliefs in French Canadians" that Lévesque (2004, p. 57) describes. However, my mother's use of English in this instance also interrupts my thinking about how differently English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians continue to understand 'Canadian' culture, history and 'nationhood' and how French Canadians outside Québec, although for the most part bilingual and self-identified Canadians, continue to understand culture, history and 'community' through the notion of "*survivance*."

(Protestant) and French- (Catholic) speaking students (Lévesque, 2004, p. 62), only to have separatists strongly advocate Québec nationalist history programs in the 1970s and 1990s. Interestingly, both documents maintained deep concern for contemporary understandings of history and identity and for the views between French and English Canadians and, as a result, called for some sort of "national" curriculum standards in history and social studies for both Québec and Canada (Lévesque, 2004). Currently in Québec, history and citizenship education do not focus on a nation-building approach, but rather on a more inclusive and pluralistic approach (Lévesque, 2004). Thus, the challenge remains to develop, teach and learn shared conceptions of citizenship, history, and identity.

Given the historical perspectives of social studies purposes and goals in "English Canada" and "French Canada," the continuing lack of consensus over "national" standards for citizenship education, and the provinces' ongoing mandate and responsibility to govern education, Canadian "social studies" education has a distinctly different history and outlook than that of the United States. Despite positive attempts at a Canadian social studies tradition, however, one cannot discount the American influence on the development of social studies in Canada. Canadian educators and students would have to wait until the 1990s for social studies curricula to be "more uniquely Canadian" (Clark, 2004). Indeed, a historical perspective of social studies in the Canadian context helps to better understand the "identity crisis" of the field in general and Canada's responses to it in particular. It also helps to situate contemporary perspectives and (continuing) controversial issues in the field of social studies.

ii) Reconsidering contemporary perspectives of social studies purposes and goals in the Canadian context

Although social studies educators are, by definition, people who are always debating what social studies is, it is generally agreed that citizenship is the primary focus of social studies in Canada and the United States (Gibson, 2004; NCSS, 1994, 2005; Sears, 1997). According to the American *Vision of Powerful Teaching and Learning in the Social Studies* (NCSS, 1993), the purpose of social studies is to help students build social understanding and civic efficacy, the latter defined as "the readiness and willingness to assume citizenship responsibilities" (p. 213). In the Canadian context, all ministries of education agree that citizenship education is the raison d'être of social studies (Clark & Case, 1999). In Alberta, for example, the current 4-12 social studies curriculum describes the "ultimate goal" of social studies as "responsible citizenship" which "includes participating constructively in the democratic process by making rational decisions" (Alberta Learning, 1993, p. A.1). While this existing Program of Studies defines citizens as "responsible" and "contributing members of our society" (p. A.1), the new one emphasizes active citizenship and civic engagement in local, societal and global contexts:

> Social studies develops the key values and attitudes, knowledge and understandings and skills and processes necessary for students to become active and responsible citizens, engaged in the democratic process and aware of their capacity to effect change in their communities, society and world (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 1).

As the new Alberta Social Studies Program of Studies (2003) illustrates, the concept of citizenship is continually being redefined. The same rings true for citizenship in social studies curricula in Manitoba and Québec, where "active" citizenship has become the educational priority.

In Manitoba, the goals of social studies learning emphasize local and global contexts so that students may become "active democratic" citizens and contributing members of a "better" society. The Curriculum Framework of Outcomes states that: "Social studies enables students to acquire the skills, knowledge, and values nececessary to understand Canada and the world in which they live, to engage in active democratic citizenship, and to contribute to the betterment of society" (Manitoba Education, 2005, p. 3). Finally, in Québec, "Dans le domaine de l'univers social, l'élève apprend notamment à prendre conscience du pouvoir d'action des humains, de leur capacité de générer des changements par l'engagement et par la participation à la gestion des multiples défis du présent" (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2004, p. 13). Québec students also learn the importance of social action and their capacity to effect change.

It is interesting to note that the importance of story, identity and belonging has influenced ways of thinking about citizenship education (Shields & Ramsay, 2004, pp. 44-45). In Alberta, the new Program of Studies (2003) "has at its heart the concepts of citizenship and identity in the Canadian context" (p. 1) and "promotes a sense of belonging and acceptance in students" (p. 1) as they learn about themselves in relation to others. In Grades 4 and 5, in particular, Alberta students are to understand and appreciate the stories, histories and people of Alberta and Canada. The 2003 Program, however, does describe the role of "stories" as providing "a vital opportunity to bring history to life" (p. 47, p. 58), and recommends biographies, autobiographies, archives, news items, novels or short stories as supporting material in developing an understanding of their contribution to the students' sense of belonging and identity (p. 47). The Alberta Social Studies Program (2003) also stipulates that students will "recognize oral traditions, narratives and stories as *valid sources of knowledge* about the land, culture and history" (p. 47, my emphasis). While students are to appreciate the complexity of identity in the Albertan and Canadian contexts, they must also be taught about the 'validity' of stories, especially in the context of Aboriginal cultures and histories. Indeed, the emphasis of the new program on the first person voice and narrative illustrate the importance of both as 'valid' concepts and approaches. Considering alternative ways of constructing and representing meaning and understanding in social studies is important in promoting an interdisciplinary and contextualized approach to active student learning (McKay & Gibson, 2004, p. 104).

However, a direction for social studies is needed whether the vision of social studies is "good," "responsible," "active," or "democratic" citizenship (Clark & Case, 1999; Gibson, 2004). In 1994, a National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) task force developed curriculum standards for the social studies to determine what students in the United States should know in the realm of social studies. The Standards present an interdisciplinary model based on ten thematic strands, from "Culture" to [American democratic] "Civic Ideals and Practices." The purpose of the Social Studies Standards is to serve as a "holistic framework" for state and local curriculum standards and provide a "guiding vision" of content and purpose for all grade levels in order to achieve excellence (Parker & Jarolimek, 2001). Based on various social science and related disciplines, curriculum experiences in social studies should enable students to "construct an accurate and positive view of citizenship and become citizens able to address persistent issues, promote civic ideals and practices, and improve our democratic republic" (Parker & Jarolimek, 2001, p. 3).

While the United States has developed "curriculum standards" to ensure academic excellence in the social studies, Canada has not. Nevertheless, Canada has witnessed some interesting and provoking curriculum initiatives in the 1990s, notably the Western Canadian Protocol (WCP) project. In 1998, the four western provinces and the two territories joined forces to attempt to develop a common social studies curriculum. While Alberta was an active participant at all stages of the project and approved various foundation documents and consultative drafts, it finally withdrew from the WCP project. While the WCP project has influenced the new Alberta Social Studies Program of Studies, perhaps the unprecedented collaboration among teams that included Aboriginal and Francophone representations as full and equal partners throughout the process is most notable. Shields & Ramsay (2004) point out that such a diverse and inclusive approach to curriculum development is unlike any other process in North America (p. 40). While social studies has undergone curriculum reform initiatives across Canada (Sheilds & Ramsay, 2004), reform in the field of citizenship education is not taken seriously and still lags "well behind" work in literacy, mathematics, science, and technology (Sears, 2004, p. 102). Perhaps it is time to rethink the field of citizenship education, particularly in a multicultural and plural society such as Canada.

iii) Rethinking citizenship education goals in a postmodern world

While the social studies continues to be (re)defined and (re)interpreted, it is generally agreed that it is concerned with citizenship education. There are several traditions, purposes and orientations of social studies practice to prepare students for citizenship. In the United States, Barr, Barth & Shermis (1977) outline three "traditions" in the social studies: citizen transmission, which was identified as being most widely practised, social science, and finally reflective inquiry (pp. 59-66). In Canada, Clark & Case (1999) describe four "purposes" of citizenship education: citizenship education as social initiation, which was the perspective most widely endorsed by social studies teachers in English Canada, citizenship education as social reformation, as personal development, and as academic understanding (pp. 18-20). And Gibson (2004) identifies seven "orientations" of citizenship on a continuum, from social studies as cultural conservation, upon which most classrooms still rely, to social studies as cultural transformation, based on critical consciousness and discourse (pp. 5-19).

What is common to the analysis of Barr, Barth & Shermis (1977), Clark & Case (1999) and Gibson (2004) is that social studies teachers, over almost 30 years, appear to endorse the implied worldview of American and Canadian societies. Irregardless of wording, most teachers belong to the same camp, promoting mainstream values, maintaining the status quo, and accepting the "received" conception of society, history and citizenship (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977, p. 61; Clark & Case, 1999, p. 21; Gibson, 2004, p. 6). Although questioning is likely to occur in the various traditions/purposes/orientations, as critical thinking and issues-based learning are increasingly encouraged in social studies (Alberta Learning, 2003, 2004; Evans, 2001; Manitoba Education, 2005), dominant and uniform perspectives and practices tend to be taken as given in social studies classrooms (Durrigan Santora, 2001; Vinson & Ross, 2001). As a result, social studies teachers view the purposes of schooling in society in traditional ways, endorsing a passive vision of citizenship (Sears, 1997, p. 21) to ensure cultural survival (Barr, Barth & Shermis, 1977, p. 61). Consequently, social studies educators need to rethink constructions of citizenship in order to contribute to a deeper understanding of the citizens who make up society.

While certain authors have outlined various approaches to social studies, some are more blunt in advocating a definite position regarding the purpose of social studies education. For these advocates, the social studies approaches most frequently employed by teachers perpetuate a citizenship education model that defines and interprets social studies (curriculum) through a narrow, Eurocentric lens and citizenship from an uncritical stance (Gibson, 2004), rather than "help students understand and participate in the current and future social world" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 16). For instance, gendered notions of citizenship (Tupper, 2002), gender politics (Bernard-Powers, 1995), and a multicultural focus of patriarchy (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2001) need to be an explicit part of the social studies curriculum because liberal democratic definitions of the citizen are limited to (white) men and such constricted definitions of citizenship are normative in social studies. Critical questioning of social studies content and process, connecting logic and rationality with feelings, inquiry teaching, and classroom organization are ways of contributing to the "fuller picture of a complex society" (Bernard-Powers, 1995, pp. 200-201). Since liberal democratic definitions of citizenship persist, the ultimate goal of rethinking citizenship in gendered terms, according to Bernard-Powers (1995), is "to alter the path, merging the public and private, the personal and the political, and the concept of citizen" (p. 205). As a result, social studies teachers (and their students) are asked to question comfortable assumptions about power, privilege and difference.

Houser & Kuzmic (2001) promote a worldview that addresses a deeper understanding of community and connectedness, an "ethical" practice of citizenship that ought to guide our exploration and understanding of the world. They call for a "postmodern citizenship education" because

> the field has not gone far enough to embrace the opportunities for personal and societal development afforded by our sociocultural diversity or to support a discourse that adequately interrogates the still dominant cultures of individualism, acquisition, and domination that exist both within the United States and abroad (p. 437).

The importance of social studies education, then, is to ethically face increasing world demands within a rigid (American) culture of individualism. By endorsing a postmodern framework that includes the notion of "ethical citizenship," ethical citizens are encouraged to "assume greater personal responsibility for transforming [an] unjust system" (p. 456). For example, Manitoba appears to support Houser & Kuzmic's (2001) ethical purpose of citizenship education. It is through social studies, Manitoba Education (2005) explains, that "students are encouraged to participate actively as citizens and members of communities and to make informed and ethical choices when faced with the challenges of living in a pluralistic democratic society" (p. 3).

A final example is the call for multicultural education in plural societies such as Canada and the United States, where ethnocultural diversity is accelerating. Kehoe (1997) acknowledges the vital role of multicultural education in the social studies in Canada, but at the same time provides a wake-up call to educators and students by saying that they are racist. In a democracy, according to Kehoe (1997), the purpose of the social studies should be equal opportunity for all people. Following what he calls "the single most important goal" to achieve, Kehoe (1997) finds the 'two founding nations theory' particularly "offensive" because it disregards the valuable contributions of Aboriginal peoples and excludes those who are neither of French or English heritage. Kehoe (1997) concludes that equality of opportunity cannot be achieved within an exclusionary definition of Canadian citizenship and identity and, therefore, calls for an "inclusive perspective" to achieve less racism and greater acceptance of cultural diversity.

In setting the context for "critical multiculturalism," Steinberg & Kincheloe (2001) examine issues of power and privilege and how they shape social and educational reality and consciousness. In their words, critical multiculturalism "embraces a social vision that moves beyond the particular concerns of specific social groups" (p. 8), and "integrates and connects the study of race, class, and gender to the nature of consciousness construction, knowledge production, and modes of oppression" (p. 8). For example, white people are asked to rethink whiteness and white privilege in a critical multicultural context that engages students and teachers in discussions around the production of official Western white history and, in turn, around the production of counter-history (pp. 17-19). Recognizing the political dynamics of society and schools, where marginalization and privilege produce identities and shape collective consciousness (Steinberg & Kincheloe, 2001, p. 19), Kehoe's (1997) call of racism does not go far enough. Multicultural education must be 'critical' to analyze the discourses of power and privilege that shape knowledge about cultures and society. Understanding the divergent ways that citizenship education purposes and goals are described, discussed and deconstructed allows social studies educators to gain insight into the "received" conception of society, history and citizenship within a wider society of power, privilege and difference.

It is important to note that Egan (1999), while less concerned with citizenship, argues that ongoing conceptual confusion in terms of social studies purposes and goals have wreaked havoc on the field. "The price is that the social studies curriculum," as he puts it bluntly, "has not worked, does not work, and cannot work" (p. 132). Most social studies educators would likely not answer Egan's call to let the social studies experiment die. However, Egan (1999) makes a good point in rethinking citizenship goals and, more importantly, the ideological implications of the social studies curriculum in a pluralistic society. Understanding that ideological unanimity surely does not exist in plural societies, he concludes by saying that educators should be more concerned with the implicit ideological aims inherent in the social studies curriculum, rather than with approaches for preparing (read producing) "good citizens." In his words, "If we are promoting and perpetuating a myth of the history of the nation in our program of socialization, we should surely be careful and self-critical in how we go about it" (Egan, 1999, p. 145).

In summary, the field of social studies education is controversial on many fronts. Its definitions are not definitive in scope, but its purposes and goals are, depending on the jurisdiction. The normative concept of citizenship is highly contested because it is internally complex. Finally, the means to achieve the complex and changing goals of citizenship education in a postmodern world are increasingly challenging teachers and students because democratic citizenship education is not a neutral project. It is no wonder that social studies educators "continue to struggle – philosophically, theoretically, and practically – with what citizenship really means" (Houser & Kuzmic, 2001, p. 437).

Examining recent developments in social studies education

Since nearly a century ago, social studies has grown as a field and in its complexity. Having reviewed the historical roots of social studies and the growth of the discipline in Canada, as well as its definitions, purposes and goals, it is important to examine recent developments that affect the field of social studies education. While current trends and issues can be discussed in several different ways,[21] I will highlight two key developments in order to explore and better understand the role of a dynamic social studies in the context of accelerating diversity within Canada and the Canadian francophonie. For the purposes of this proposal and my research project, I have identified globalization and pluralism as the two primary issues of interest to social studies and Francophone educators and researchers alike.[22]

i) Taking a closer look at globalization

The growing interest in globalization is in large measure attributable to Canada's increasing diversity and the increased interconnectedness among nations, economies, peoples, and cultures. Rethinking globalization within a social-educational framework has become a priority for social studies educators. On the one hand, global education, the field which has traditionally taught about the world, has changed with the times and, on the other, there are growing concerns about the effects of globalization; as a result, the meanings and roles of both global education and globalization need to be better understood (Richardson, 2004, p. 138). But what does it mean to be a global citizen?

---

[21] See, for example, Mathison, Ross & Vinson (2001) and Vinson & Ross (2001) on standards and testing in social studies; Martineau & Laville (2000), Osborne (2004) and Seixas (2002) on rationales for teaching history; and, Diem (2000) and Smits (2001) on social studies and computer technology.

[22] See, for example, Alberta Learning, 2001, 2003; Durrigan Santora, 2001; FCFA, 2001; Heller, 1999; Merryfield & Subedi, 2001; Sears, 2004; Tétu, 1992; Willinsky, 1998.

How is globalization incorporated into the social studies curriculum? How is globalization changing the way social studies educators teach and think about citizenship and democracy?

Globalization is a term that is commonly known to describe the increased interconnectedness among the world's nations, economically, politically, technologically, socially and culturally.[23] More recently, globalization is most often discussed in economic terms (e.g. Alberta Education, 2005; Ghosh & Abdi, 2004; Richardson, 2004; Steger, 2003). It has essentially become an economic process in which a global economy invites citizens to see the world as one (global market). For example, the resource draft of the new Alberta social studies curriculum asks students to investigate economic and contemporary understandings of globalization: "To what extent does globalization contribute to sustainable prosperity for all people?" and "To what extent should globalization shape identity?" – all under the heading of "Key Issue: To what extent should we embrace globalization?" (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 13). Manitoba students are encouraged to explore citizenship in the global context and, although the word "economic" is not apparent, the challenge of globalization is seen in its economic disparities and such contributing factors as violence and militarization.

> The nation-state—including Canada—is under increasing challenge, externally from the forces of globalization, and internally from demands for more local or regional autonomy. The world also continues to be characterized by severe disparities between rich and poor countries. This disparity violates the basic principles of social justice and human dignity, and, at the same time, gives rise to dangerous tensions and rivalries. War and violence continue to be a common means of addressing internal and international disputes, and, because of developments in weapons technology, are becoming more destructive (Manitoba Education, 2004, p. 10).

---

[23] When considering the term 'globalization' and conflicting definitions, it is important to understand that the concept is neither precise nor endorsed by everyone everywhere.

Evidently, Alberta and Manitoba view globalization differently, evidence of competing ideologies. On the one hand, Alberta, a prosperous province, promotes a positive connotation of globalization, an idea that should be "embraced" and a process that should "contribute to sustainable prosperity for all." Alberta students are required to "explore the implications of economic globalization" in general and to analyze "economic challenges and opportunities of globalization" in particular (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 23). While students will "explore multiple perspectives on sustainability and prosperity in a globalizing world," the emphasis is on knowledge transmission, the primary focus of global education (Richardson, 2004, p. 144).

On the other hand, Manitoba focusses on the negative effects of globalization such as social injustice, violence and war. Thus, globalization is an idea that should be questioned and discussed more critically, especially with regards to the future of nation-states. The term "sustainability" refers to the environment, rather than to economic prosperity, and the "increasing fragility" of the environment challenges the "particularly important responsibility" of citizens (Manitoba Education, 2004, p. 10). While "economic growth" is discussed, the emphasis is on transformative education. As Richardson (2004) argues,

> globalization represents a unique challenge that demands a reorientation of global education towards transformative education [because] globalization is a phenomenon that demands that students do more than study its consequences; they also need to formulate an informed response to the impact globalization is having on their lives, the lives of others, and on the planet in general (p. 144).

Although the phenomenon has encompassed drastic changes involving the entire world, "globalization remains an inexact term for the strong, and perhaps irreversible, changes in the economy, labor force, technologies, communication, cultural patterns, and political alliances that it is imposing on every nation" (Stromquist & Monkman, 2000, p. 3). While globalization is more often thought of in economic terms, one should strive to understand various dimensions and competing ideologies of globalization and global education.[24]

If social studies curricula are to prepare students for active and responsible citizenship at the global level, then how do they represent different perspectives of global education and citizenship? Globalization, the buzzword of our time, precipitates the need for social studies educators to not only reconceptualize knowledge and instruction, but also global education. Merryfield (2001), while acknowledging the relevance of teaching about globalization and the interconnectedness of peoples, economies and environments, also writes how global educators "need to globalize global education through literature, theories, and diverse perspectives that reflect the complexity of the planet in the early twenty-first century" (p. 181). It does not suffice to teach about inclusion; rather, the challenge lies in having students examine mainstream, Eurocentric assumptions in order to rethink frameworks for understanding peoples, places, and problems – both past and present. Merryfield (2001) describes this challenge as "moving the center of global education from institutionalized divisions of people and ideas to the complexity of the interaction and syncrety of the global human experience" (pp. 181-182). For example, by having students (and teachers) attempt to understand two worldviews, including those of people who are underrepresented in mainstream academic knowledge, they must uncover and (re)create new knowledge to develop a perspective consciousness about concepts and contexts of identity, diversity, power, and globalization. By moving the centre of global education and, in turn, the centre of the social studies curriculum to include the perspectives, ideas and experiences of underrepresented people, social studies students will better understand the complexity of globalization (Merryfield, 2001).

---

[24] Richardson (2004), while he outlines five different perspectives of global education, also discusses and compares competing ways of viewing the world and globalization. Because globalization encompasses its own worldview (p. 138) and, more recently, global education has taken up neo-liberal constructs of the global marketplace (p. 143), global education is struggling ideologically. As Richardson (2004) writes, "Caught between learning *about* the world and learning to live *in* the world, the specific challenge global

But the question remains: how do students become global citizens? The literature suggests that the central aim of social studies was (and continues to be) the production of "good citizens," the domain of the civic nation. In the 19th century, the nation became the focus of people's loyalty and the modernist idea of national character created a unique sense of identity critical to the survival of the state (Richardson, 2002b). Because the identity of the citizen has historically been associated with the nation, national citizenship has become a problematic concept in a globalized world. Does one's allegiance lie with the nation or with the world? Does citizenship education need to distinguish between the two or, as is the case of Alberta, continue to reinforce the interests of Canada and Canadian citizens?[25]

The effects of globalization challenge Canadian students to serve the needs of the nation state and the global marketplace. In Canada, "global citizenship is framed as a matter of national self-interest and almost exclusively tied to the civic structures of the nation state" (Richardson, 2004, p. 145). For example, Grade 3 Alberta students are introduced to the concept of global citizenship by reflecting on Canada's rights, roles and

---

education faces is how best to prepare students to act as informed, caring, and active participants in a globalized world" (p. 147).

responsibilities in terms of environmental concerns and international organizations (Alberta Learning, 2003, p. 39). Although these students will be "connecting with the world," Grade 3 students explore Canada's involvement in other parts of the world as citizens of Canada rather than as citizens of the world (Richardson, 2004, p. 145). Their responses will be national in scope instead of international, thus putting into question Alberta Education's vision of engaging students in active and responsible citizenship at the global level.

But in debating whether or not social studies should promote global or national citizenship, the question teachers face is in the very challenge of globalization and pedagogy (Durrigan Santora, 2001; Ghosh & Abdi, 2004; Merryfield, 2001; Richardson, 2004). For example, international issues such as the Kyoto Accord on climate change need to be addressed at the global level and by numerous nation states (Richardson, 2004), thus promoting the "global consciousness" Alberta Learning (2003) aims to provide its students along with an understanding of how "opportunities and responsibilities change in an increasingly interdependent world" (p. 2). However, despite Alberta Education's desire to develop active and responsible citizens at the global level, it defines citizenship differently than other provincial jurisdictions (like its stance vis-à-vis the Kyoto Accord). As illustrated above, the terms "sustainability" and "prosperity" mean different things in different provinces. Even within a jurisdiction, educators and stakeholders differ on the meanings and goals of global education in the early 21st century. Thus, a final question of debate concerns how best to prepare students to

---

[25] As Alberta Learning (2003) states, the new Program of Studies "has at its heart the concepts of citizenship and identity in the *Canadian* context" (p. 1, my emphasis).

assume their responsibilities collectively as global citizens. While transformative global citizenship initiatives should be welcomed, it remains to be seen how social studies and global education can “imagine a civic fabric on a global scale” (Richardson, 2004, p. 147).

Irregardless of different curricular definitions and pedagogical difficulties, the literature generally maintains that social studies should promote citizenship aimed at examining and challenging the prevailing economic paradigm of globalization in a democratic society (Ghosh & Abdi, 2004; Richardson, 2004; Ross, 2001b). In sum, the issue of globalization should persuade social studies educators to reconsider questions of perspective, namely neoliberal conceptions of the world, and of pedagogy, given the challenge of preparing students to become “engaged, active, informed and responsible citizens” in a globalized world (Alberta Learning, 2003, p. 1). After all, the collective civic sense of students will have national and global ramifications: “The people in the centers of power must begin to take responsibility for the role of their societies and their governments in producing conditions the rest of the world must endure” (Merryfield & Subedi, 2001, p. 286).

ii) Taking a closer look at pluralism

Curriculum construction around notions of national and global citizenship and ‘national’ identity(ies) are increasingly contentious in plural societies such as the United States and Canada (e.g. Parker, 2003; Richardson, 2002a, 2002b, 2004). Where do students find their sense of belonging (i.e. to the ‘nation’, region, province and/or the world)? How do social studies educators encourage the development of a Canadian national identity while respecting diversity? What is a pluralist conception of citizenship?

Pluralism, a broader organizer than the ethnocultural diversity of multiculturalism, acknowledges difference of understandings based on gender, class, culture, language, sexual orientation, and so on. Canada can be described as a multicultural and pluralist society whose diversity is expressed in different ways. On the one hand, the Government of Canada (2004) describes multiculturalism as "ensur[ing] that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging" (n.p.). On the other, Canada is expanding its concept of what constitutes diversity, as it moves "beyond language, ethnicity, race and religion, to include cross-cutting characteristics such as gender, sexual orientation, and range of ability and age" (n.p.). Pluralism then refers to a more encompassing notion of diversity, including issues such as Aboriginal self-government, same-sex unions and women's equity.

Furthermore, pluralism contributes to the discourse of identity. Taylor (1994) examines the link between identity and recognition; in a pluralistic society, the dignity of all citizens is rooted in the importance of recognition. As he suggests, "Due recognition is not just a courtesy we owe people. It is a vital human need" (p. 26). But are people recognized as individuals or groups? And in societies that will become increasingly diverse, how do people develop their sense of belonging? Again, Taylor (1993) is helpful in understanding the complexity and confusion surrounding the notion of pluralism and national identity, especially in the Canadian context. Creating a pluralist sense of Canadian national identity is predicated on the recognition of Canada's "deep diversity," meaning that

> a plurality of ways of belonging would also be acknowledged and accepted. Someone of, says, Italian extraction in Toronto or Ukrainian extraction in Edmonton might indeed feel Canadian as a bearer of individual rights in a multicultural mosaic.... But this person might nevertheless accept that a Québécois or a Cree or a Dene might belong in a very different way, that these persons were Canadian through being members of their national communities (Taylor, 1993, p. 183, cited in Richardson, 2002a).

The challenge of pluralism, like globalization, puts into question the nation, national identity and civic allegiance, and thus growing debates seek where (national) boundaries are as people struggle to find common touchtones. Consequently, other layers of understanding and awareness need to be created, and the diversity of citizens needs to be recognized.

In Alberta, the new Social Studies Program of Studies (2003) acknowledges Taylor's "plurality of ways of belonging" in the program's rationale and philosophy. It is noteworthy that a review of the position of citizenship and identity in the Alberta social studies curriculum since 1971 indicates that both core concepts are contested at many levels, namely the problematic teaching of 'national' citizenship because of its nonrecognition of difference.[26] Central to the new Program vision is "the recognition of the diversity of experiences and perspectives and the pluralistic nature of Canadian society" and the recognition "that citizenship and identity are shaped by multiple factors such as culture, language, environment, gender, ideology, religion, spirituality and philosophy" (p. 1). While constructs of citizenship and identity remain complex,

---

[26] Thompson (2004) takes a critical look at the ways multiple perspectives have been read into the Alberta junior high social studies curriculum. A review of the curriculum over the last several decades provides an understanding of the evolving constructs of citizenship and identity. This provides the foundation for a postcolonial reading of the new Alberta social studies curriculum along with a clearer understanding of the fluid concept of identity.

Durrigan Santora (2001) reminds us that, in an era of globalization and increased diversity, the goal of the social studies is to help students "become active participants in cross-cultural communities of learners and empowered citizens in a cultural democracy" (p. 462). Houser & Kuzmic (2001) also remark on the importance of divergent perspectives: "Rather than independence, isolation, and domination, we must begin to recognize and embrace the interdependence, reciprocity, and contingency of our postmodern world" (p. 453).

Yet, despite the globalization, pluralism and multicultural and global education rhetoric, there is little evidence to suggest that most social studies teachers have had the theoretical and pedagogical training needed to prepare students to work with people different from themselves (Merryfield, 2001, p. 192). Parker (2003), Ladson-Billings (2001), and Durrigan Santora (2001) approach pluralism in different ways in order to help teachers and students recognize the limitations of modernist assumptions and develop deeper understandings of the world and its peoples.

Parker (2003) aims at revealing democratic possibilities for a committed citizenry in a diverse and complex society where notions of pluralism and assimilation collide. In a multicultural nation state such as the United States, Parker argues, unity and diversity must coexist and its citizens must come to see the importance of such a delicate yet complex challenge. It does not suffice to enhance civic participation, but to "deepen democracy" in both schools and society at large and to extend democracy to ethnic, racial, cultural and language communities. To meet the challenges of a deliberative democracy, educators are called to "simultaneously engage in" multicultural education and citizenship education (p. xviii). Moreover, Parker (2003) explores the interdependence between unity and diversity or, borrowing from Kymlicka's (1995) notion of "multicultural citizenship," a singular citizen identity alongside a plurality of groups and group identities. If multicultural citizenship is at issue, then multicultural education is seen as integral to the development of democratic citizens just as citizenship education is seen as essential to the development of a plural society. As Parker (2003) describes it,

> Democratic citizenship education seeks to teach, among other things, that diversity is a social fact, that it is a social good, why this is so, and how diversity and democracy require one another. It seeks to do this by educating young and old alike in the arts of democratic living, which include, centrally, an understanding of both *pluribus* (the many) and *unum* (the one), and an understanding that the two are, in fact, interdependent (p. 1, emphasis in original).

The interdependent relationship of multicultural education and citizenship education is key to Parker's argument; so, too, is a committed citizenry that embraces both the one and the many. For Parker (2003), then, the central citizenship question becomes: "How can we live together justly, in ways that are mutually satisfying, and which leave our differences, both individual and group, intact and our multiple identities recognized?" (p. 20, emphasis in original).

Ladson-Billings (2001), in describing a "culturally relevant" social studies approach, illustrates the importance of engaging and, in turn, serving all students in social studies classrooms. If social studies is "to help create active, participating citizens who are capable of high-level functioning in a democractic, multicultural society," Ladson-Billings (2001) argues, then all students are to benefit from schooling and "high-quality social studies experiences" (p. 204). As a result, teachers need to learn how to make social studies teaching more "culturally relevant." The purpose of culturally relevant teaching, like transformative global education, is "to empower students to critically examine the society in which they live and to work for social change" (p. 202). In order to make social studies teaching more culturally relevant, teachers need to reconsider conceptions of knowledge. They need to view course content critically, that is, challenge 'official' knowledge by creating space for students' lived experiences and by using shared teacher-student knowledge to acquire additional social and historical knowledge (p. 211). By building bridges between teacher and student knowledge, course content and lived experience, and various histories and stories told and not told, culturally relevant teachers attempt to influence normative conceptions of knowledge and identity and, ultimately, social studies instruction. The practice of culturally relevant pedagogy, therefore, can be described as "urg[ing] collective action grounded in cultural understandings, experiences and ways of knowing the world" (Ladson-Billings, 2001, p. 202). By having teachers reconsider how they teach particular social studies content or knowledge, the importance of instruction – especially in a democractic and pluralist society – should not be forgotten in the social studies dialogue (Ladson-Billings, 2001).

Durrigan Santora (2001) uses the metaphor of a "window and mirror" (p. 151) to illustrate how social studies curricula should reflect the multiple identities and voices of students and teachers. As she describes, "Shifting to more inclusive ways of knowing implies using the confluence of new knowledge and perspectives that flows from the waters of multiple cultural streams to transform one's assumptions, values, beliefs, and ways of experiencing" (p. 150). The new Alberta social studies curriculum (Alberta Education, 2005) reflects the changing nature of society and of "21st century learners:"

> The program reflects multiple perspectives, including Aboriginal and Francophone, that contribute to Canada's evolving realities. It fosters the building of a society that is pluralistic, bilingual, multicultural, inclusive and democratic. The program emphasizes the importance of diversity and respect for differences as well as the need fo social cohesion and the functioning of society. It promotes a sense of belonging and acceptance in students (p. 1).

The "multiple perspectives" approach seeks to foster more inclusive ways to 'correct' social studies practices and have students (and teachers) recognize normative interpretations of citizenship, identity and culture by the dominant group(s). For McKay & Gibson (2004), in response to societal developments such as globalization and pluralism, encouraging alternative ways of thinking about teaching and learning in Canadian social studies classrooms is imperative:

> Care also needs to be taken to reflect the diverse nature of Canadian society and to *hear* the previously silenced voices of many of its citizens. [...] Careful consideration needs to be given to the vision(s) of Canada and the Canadian experience that are to be conveyed to students (p. 20).

In this way, the discourse of critical multiculturalism "is blazing a distinct and emancipatory path through the frontiers of democratic pluralism for a more epistemologically sensitive social studies education" (Durrigan Santora, 2001, p. 151). Such an epistemological shift requires the ambiguity, uncertainty, complexity and fluidity of a postmodern world. It is noteworthy that the Manitoba Social Studies Framework (2004) describes the necessity of a postmodern search for understanding active democratic citizenship in Canada:

> It [Canada] is a bilingual and multicultural country committed to pluralism, human rights, and democracy.... Canada is a complex country that requires special qualities in its citizens. These citizenship qualities include: ... the ability to work through conflicts and contradictions that can arise among citizens [and] the willingness to live with ambiguity and uncertainty (p. 9).

As the Alberta and Manitoba examples illustrate, teachers and students need to understand and appreciate the fluid and interdependent concepts of citizenship and identity. However, if (critical) multicultural education and citizenship education are to succeed, "change must be both deep and pervasive" (Durrigan Santora, 2001, p. 157).

Francophone researchers and educators also stress the need for Francophone teachers in Canada to provide learning experiences that will "cherche à développer une citoyenneté élargie, mondiale, pluraliste et responsable" (Lessard, Ferrer & Desroches, 1997, p. 8). In a global Francophone context, Deniau (2001) writes that "Il s'agit pour les pays francophones de reconnaître les valeurs telles ouverture au monde extérieur, dialogue, accueil à la différence et préparation de l'avenir" (p. 19). The vitality and the future of Francophone communities, especially outside Québec, have been at the forefront of Francophone educators and teachers, and recognizing the ethnocultural diversity of Francophones in local, national and international contexts is crucial for the very survival of the Canadian francophonie (e.g. Couture & Bergeron, 2002; Lafontant, 2001; Thompson, 2001). Moreover, Francophone communities need to be mindful of the increased diversity of Francophones across Canada and, in turn, of a multiplicity of Francophone experiences and perspectives, which will ultimately redefine what it means to be Francophone in Canada. As Gérin-Lajoie (1995) points out, "Il est important que les communautés francophones qui vivent en milieu minoritaire s'ouvrent aux divers groupes qui viennent s'établir chez elles. L'identité collective doit donc se redéfinir à partir de cette nouvelle réalité pluraliste" (p. 43). Quell's (1998) work with Afro-Francophone newcomers to Ontario, for example, illustrates how there are multiple ways of being Francophone in Ontario and how, in plural societies such as Canada, multiple and complex identities can flourish. By addressing Francophone diversity and social cohesion, Francophone students in a linguistic minority setting such as Alberta can learn to develop relationships both within and among communities that are culturally, linguistically, ethnically and religiously diverse. The new Alberta social studies program aims to provide learning opportunities for Francophone and non-Francophone students alike to understand both "the historical and contemporary realities of Francophones in Canada" and "the multiethnic and intercultural makeup of Francophones in Canada" (Alberta Education, 2005, p. 4). If all Alberta students are to understand the relationships across language, culture, identity, and power, then they must develop an awareness and understanding of the different histories and stories of Canada's diverse Francophone peoples. It is by recognizing all of Canada's peoples that students will examine and reflect on the fluid concepts of citizenship and identity in a Canadian context within the discourse of diversity. Social studies can provide a critical framework to understand the (French) world and (Francophone) Canada – both past and present – and explore new ways of seeing and knowing.

Revisioning the social studies in a plural society

Curriculum initiatives in the field of social studies reflect the need to revise programs in order to represent plural societies and the students that inhabit these increasingly dynamic places. Program revisions also reflect the current educational priorities of various jurisdictions in an era of globalization. But difficult questions still remain: what is a pluralist conception of democratic citizenship at national and global levels? And what are the ways students think and feel about citizenship and related questions of belonging, diversity, and civic engagement? Currently, research in social studies in general and in citizenship education in particular is not a high priority across educational jurisdictions because a knowledge base to support curriculum reform has yet to be provided (Sears, 2004, pp. 102-103). While quantitative research has been the preferred method in broad survey work in Europe, the United States and Canada, Sears (2004) deems it "essential" that qualitative research be conducted to better understand students' thinking in social studies and their feelings about citizenship.

My qualitative research project on the multiplicity and complexity of Francophone identity(ies) in Alberta is framed by both curriculum studies and social studies theory and practice. In rethinking social studies, Ladson-Billings (2001) suggests building on students' and teachers' own experiences. Durrigan Santora (2001), Merryfield (2001), Merryfield & Subedi (2001) also highlight the need for personal narrativity alongside mainstream academic, historical, cultural and social knowledge. From a Canadian perspective, Richardson (2002a, 2002b, 2004) stresses the importance of reimagining Canadian national identity and citizenship in an era of globalization. From a Francophone perspective, Couture & Bergeron (2002), Gérin-Lajoie (1995) and Quell (1998) suggest that new directions regarding citizenship and identity concepts be taken because French-speaking immigrants, primarily from Africa, are redefining what it means to be Francophone in Canada, especially within Francophone communities outside Québec. If Francophone educators and researchers are to heed Deniau's (1998) call to "*accueil à la différence*" and "*préparation de l'avenir*," then my doctoral research should help Francophone and non-Francophone teachers alike better understand the relationship between education and how we come to think of who we are in plural societies such as Canada.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

When I sit down to make my stories I know very well that I want to take the reader by the throat, break her heart, and heal it again. With that intention I cannot sort out myself, say this part is for the theorist, this for the poet, this for the editor, and this for the wayward ethnographer who only wants to document my experience.

– Dorothy Allison (in Behar, 1996, p. 161)

Toutes les biographies comme toutes les autobiographies comme tous les récits racontent une histoire à la place d'une autre histoire.

– Hélène Cixous (in Fitzgerald, 1999)

The quality of curriculum-as-lived experience is the heart and core as to why we exist as teachers, principals, superintendents, curriculum developers, curriculum consultants, and teacher educators.

– Ted Aoki (1991b, p. 10)

Context of the study

Given the increasing diversity in Francophone communities across Canada, it is critical for the Francophone educational milieu to reflect and value the diversity of lived Francophone experiences. The distinct mission of Francophone schools outside Québec is to enable official language minority students to develop a Francophone identity and a sense of belonging to the Francophone community. If the Francophone school plays a fundamental role in integrating language, identity, culture and community, then what happens when the face of the francophonie changes? This dissertation proposes to seek a deeper understanding of relationships among history, memory, culture, language and geography to better understand the complexities of Francophone identity in Alberta and Canada.

A poststructural inquiry

I wonder how Francophone youth in Alberta make sense of their lived experiences and how they represent such experiences. The purpose of this qualitative inquiry is to understand the nature and significance of the lived experiences of ten Grade 7 students, aged 12 and 13, who attended one urban Francophone Catholic high school in Alberta during the 2005-2006 school year. As I look back over the personal and professional landscapes of my bilingual and bicultural life, I have long sought answers to questions about language, culture and identity. I have also become aware of the discomfort of living with ambiguity, complexity and uncertainty. Poststructuralism invites me to ponder the questions I pose, rather than seek any definitive answers. In wondering, then, I embrace a research approach that will allow for an interpretive collaboration between students and their teacher, between Francophones of different places and times, carrying with them different memories and histories.

My experiences and memories related to various Francophone communities, to Francophone identity and to Canada, lead to pose the following questions that guide this research:

- What are the lived Francophone experiences of Grade 7 students in Alberta?
- What insights do student stories of lived Francophone experiences in Alberta offer about the francophonie, about curriculum, about accelerating pluralism?

Considering that my participants carry with them very different memories and histories because of their ethnic, cultural, racial, linguistic and family heritage, it is important to offer an interwoven account that is rooted in the main question, but also locate the political and pedagogical paths of identity formation in Alberta's Francophone school system. Thus, here are three sub-questions around notions of identity, language, and curriculum:

- How do the life experiences of the students involved in this study help us re-imagine Francophone identity?
- How does language challenge and inform our senses of self and of the world?
- How do curriculum discourses inform and interrupt narratives of Francophone identity?

Trying to understand how young people perceive and construct the francophonie and their Francophone identity as lived in Alberta can involve various methodological approaches. And I have chosen an integrative approach, connecting the students' narratives of identity to literary anthropology method, which situates life experiences, culturally, historically and contextually through a collective reading of a commonplace text (described briefly in this chapter and more fully in Chapter 10 on curriculum discourses). Denzin & Lincoln (2000) endorse a juxtaposition of qualitative research perspectives and practices for two reasons: there is no single way of doing interpretive qualitative research, and being qualitative researchers means becoming "interpretive bricoleurs" who learn how to use a variety of methods to better understand the world and people's lives. As Denzin & Lincoln (2000) point out, qualitative researchers should commit to using various interpretive practices:

> Accordingly, qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices, hoping always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand. It is understood, however, that each practice makes the world visible in a different way. Hence there is frequently a commitment to using more than one interpretive practice in any study (pp. 3-4).

In undertaking multilayered analysis, I am drawn to render my participants' world(s) "visible" by locating their lived realities in a historical, political and contemporary context, and by connecting their experiences to some of the discourses that can, in turn, help us think critically about the ways we make sense of being Francophone.

Saukko (2005) also proposes an integrative methodological framework for the study of culture, text, people, and their lived realities because it is important to pay particular attention to the contextual, dialogic and self-reflexive dimensions of one's work. The mode of inquiry in cultural studies should be multidimensional, Saukko argues, because combining different approaches to people's lived experiences, to the discourses that construct such experiences, and to the social and historical context that shapes different perspectives of reality, can provide a bridge to better understanding and portraying the complexity of responses and realities in an increasingly plural world.

Although I question Saukko's use of the world "validities" when speaking about "methdological programs" in an integrated framework because it seems to imply a 'guarantee' of "truthfulness," or accuracy and objectivity, I do like her rationale for rendering a research project multidimensional and integrative in its methodological approach. Below, I have mapped out my understanding of my integrated approach, based on Saukko's (2005) proposed three dimensions.

Table 1. Proposed integrated methodological approach

Investigation of Methodological Approach	**Purpose**	**Method**
Contextual dimension	• To contextualize the wider historical, social, educational and political realities of being Francophone in Alberta and Canada	• Analyze educational policies • Analyze curriculum documents • Examine demographic statistics
Dialogic dimension (lived experiences)	• To identify what lived, local realities are from the point of view of Francophone youth, aged 12 and 13 • To situate their life experiences culturally, historically and contextually through their reading of a commonplace text	• Conduct one-on-one interviews with each participant • Conduct a focus group interview with all participants • Write life history narratives • Examine student markings of a commonplace text
Self-reflexive dimension (poststructural)	• To explore and reflect critically upon the discourses that shape these lived experiences and realities	• Incorporate personal experiences • Write introspective and retrospective chapters • Keep a historical commonplace text (i.e. picture book) • Use curriculum artifacts (e.g. short films, song)

In order to make sense of lived experiences of Francophone youth in Alberta, I built upon a combination of different methods, expressly because I am interested in the complexity and plurality of Francophone lived experiences and because I am trying to understand the implications of such multilayered realities. For example, I cannot be forgetful of the fixation of Francophone educational policies in Alberta (and in official language minority communities across Canada) on countering assimilation, promoting and protecting a Francophone cultural and linguistic environment, and nurturing a Francophone identity and sense of belonging (e.g. Alberta Learning, 2001; Ontario, 2005), because this context will guide the analysis. Government of Canada and Alberta statistics, as well as educational and curriculum documents can help us to describe the lived realities of the Francophone world against a backdrop of rapid change in an Alberta environment of increasing migration and immigration. But official statistics and documents cannot do this alone. Thinking through the wider historical, social, and political contexts – and normative discourses – of Alberta and Canada will help me better comprehend how young Francophones perceive the francophonie and their place in it (or not), as 12- and 13-year-olds living in Alberta. By drawing attention to the complex realities of different groups of Francophones within the Albertan francophonie, I can trouble familiar ways of thinking of Francophone identity, while making visible the heterogeneity of Francophone identities in particular. By interviewing each participant twice and then interviewing all participants together in a focus group, I can explore several different perspectives on questions of language, culture and identity. Furthermore, by using literary text to engage participants in these questions, I hope that we can, individually and collectively, speak to the ways being Francophone is constructed and experienced in our daily lives. Overall, using an integrative methodological approach will be useful in highlighting how multiple experiences, realities, perspectives, contexts and discourses both inform and interrupt each other.

Literary anthropology

I chose to do a literary anthropology research project with my participants in order to create a pathway towards understanding an increasingly different francophonie in a plural world. Wolfgang Iser, literary theorist, names an interpretive approach that explores the relationships developed between a reader and literary fiction, in particular those relationships that promote the interpretation of the reader's self-identity (Sumara, 2002). For Iser, literary anthropology is associated with the examination of both text and reader, a turn to cultural anthropology and literary studies in search of answers to human experience. On the one hand, cultural anthropologists such as Behar (1996) have committed to combining traditional anthropological fieldwork with a researcher's personal experience in order to render visible human emotion and experience. Anthropological writing, then, not only interprets culture but it also challenges researchers to pay close attention to their own experience of events. Richardson (2001), too, suggests that researchers should be "getting personal" in interpreting narratives of identity and understanding meaning as continually constructed.

On the other hand, the idea of literary studies contributing to the understanding of human experience is not new. "It struck me early," writes Greene (1991), "that the languages of imaginative literature disclosed alternative ways of being in and thinking about the world" (p. 108). Poststructuralism privileges alternative ways of knowing and being and making sense of the world and our place in it (Belsey, 2002). As Sumara (2002) points out, "readers and texts and contexts of reading collaborate in the continued inventing and interpreting of knowledge" (p. 238). Thus, literary anthropology invites researchers to draw on interpretive practices that allow them to better understand literature and the experiences of those studied, while also looking differently at their own life stories.

Literary anthropology as a research practice/perspective is useful in my research for studying how people are situated culturally, historically and contextually through their reading of literature. Literary anthropology is a method that uses text to create relationships among experiences of history, memory, culture, language, and geography (Sumara, 2002). Using literature to develop issues around language, culture and identity can help teachers and students alike in re-thinking and discussing how people negotiate (their) identities. On the one hand, creative thinking is promoted "within these literary commonplaces [in] that readers collect past, present, and projected interpretations of themselves and their situations" (Sumara, 2002, p. 240). On the other, literary anthropology as a research method recognizes the importance of (auto)biography in exploring the complexities of lived experience and identity. For Iser, the study of literature tells us more about ourselves (and others) than about the books we read. Birkerts (1994) agrees:

> Language is the landmass that is constantly under our feet and the feet of others and allows us to get to each other's places. We bring the words, set in the intensely suggestive sequences and cadences of the writer, into ourselves. We engulf them in our consciousness and allow ourselves to be affected by them (p. 204, quoted in Johnston, 2003, p. 83).

The power of literature lies in its ability for individuals to ponder the lives and experiences of fictional characters, while also raising reader consciousness about social issues and making connections with one's own lived situations. Greene (1995) reinforces the crucial role literature plays in raising reader awareness and looking more closely or differently at one's own lived experience: "We begin moving beyond immediacies and general categories, as reflective practitioners are bound to do when they try to make sense. We see; we hear; we make connections. We participate in some dimensions that we could not know if our imagination were not aroused…" (pp. 186-187, quoted in Johnston, 2003, p. 133). Therefore, literature becomes meaningful when exploring human experience and attempting to make sense of our lives and those of others. It also becomes "essential" when concerning ourselves with other people's stories and considering the possibility of "discover[ing] a more complex vision of human life" (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 8). Literature and the literary imagination play an important role when seeking to draw attention to the complex realities of (young) people's lives.

Site and population selection

I have selected an urban Francophone Catholic high school in Alberta as the research site for this dissertation for three reasons. First, it is important to me to pursue research in a Franco-Albertan school setting, not only because it is in this place that I can currently best study the lived experiences of Francophone students, but also because the notions of culture, language and identity are deeply entrenched in educational policy and curriculum documents (e.g. Alberta Education, 2005; Alberta Learning, 2001, 2004). Second, Francophone students, communities and their institutions in Alberta are encouraged to "interpr[éter] la présence francophone à la communauté régionale" (Alberta Learning, 2001, p. 22). How Francophone students perceive, define and, ultimately, 'interpret' this 'Francophone presence' and their place in it, is at the heart of my research study. Considering that the research site is multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural, it is important to me to conduct research in a school that reflects an increasingly diverse school community.[27] It is also important to reiterate that the student population of this school community is rapidly changing given increased Francophone immigration and migration against a backdrop of an economically strong Alberta. Given the curriculum and policy expectations coupled with an increasingly globalized world francophonie here in Alberta, students and their former teacher should (re)interpret, individually and collectively, the plurality of "la présence francophone" and experience in Alberta. Third, and finally, the study is a literary anthropology research project, which involves reflection on personal interpretations of literary fiction and (auto)biographical narrative; that is, I will explore the ambiguities and tensions that make up our individual and collective identities as Francophones in Alberta.

Thirteen of my former Grade 7 students were invited to participate in the research project. I approached each of the students individually, once final marks had been submitted to the school office at the end of June. I gave each prospective participant an envelope containing the Information/Consent Letters for them and their parents, explaining the purpose and nature of this study in both French and English, as well as my contact information and a calendar outlining the timelines of the data collection period. I also briefly explained to the prospective participants the timeline of my summer data collection, which would take place mostly in July.

---

[27] The denominational school, which opened its doors in 1982 to a homogeneous White and Catholic 'Franco-Albertan' student population, has, over the years, seen students from a variety of ethnocultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds. The now heterogeneous student population includes a significant proportion of students from African and Middle Eastern backgrounds, namely immigrants, refugees and first-generation Canadians. These students tend be either Catholic or Muslim. While the majority of students are Caucasian and Catholic, they are from various regions of Canada, namely Alberta, Québec and Acadie. Furthermore, students generally speak two languages and increasingly three or four (e.g. French, English, Lingala, Kinyarwanda, Swahili, Spanish, Arabic).

Of the thirteen (six boys and seven girls), three chose not to participate due to planned summer holidays: a Burundi-born student raised in Alberta with two Congolese parents, a Québécois-born student raised in Québec with one Eastern European parent and a Québécois parent; and a European-born student raised in Alberta with a Québécois parent and a Western European parent. All thirteen of the prospective participants were intentionally selected because they make up a cross-section of the increasingly diverse Francophone population in Alberta (e.g. Franco-Albertan, Québécois, Acadian, African, European, Arab). The most appropriate sampling strategy for my research was purposeful sampling because the goal of my investigation was "to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore [I] must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). Students were selected based on criteria such as: gender, race, ethnicity, language background, birthplace (theirs and their parents'), and family milieu (e.g. two Francophone parents, Francophone/Anglophone, Francophone/other). For Creswell (1998), establishing criteria for purposefully selecting participants within a large cultural group is useful to show different layers of experience. By presenting multiple perspectives of Francophone youth of different origins, I was in a better position to describe the complexity inherent in Francophone (school) communities in Alberta and, to a larger extent, across Canada. Selection of student participants was also based on the expression of the students' interest in this research project, especially given that the data collection was taking place during the summer holidays.

Some reflections on being a teacher-researcher

From a poststructural point of view, language organizes human experience and as a 'teacher-researcher' I am called to make sense of how I understand of this linguistically constructed world (Belsey, 2002; Richardson, 2001), one that narratively constructs and reconstructs one's experiences as multiple, conflicting and continually in flux (Kerby, 1991; Richardson, 1997). For example, many teachers who pursue graduate work are drawn to study and reflect on a particular 'problem' in their practice and/or in their professional context. In becoming educational researchers, Labaree (2003) suggests that teacher practitioners can encounter peculiar problems, while unearthing purposeful possibilities: "their mission as doctoral students – and later as teacher educators and scholars of education – is, overwhelmingly, to improve schools. This powerful sense of mission is a powerful resource" (p. 16). Labaree (2003) is not alone in recommending action research for teacher-researchers.[28] Since my arrival to Alberta, the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) and my Francophone local have encouraged its members to undertake action research projects. In 2000, the ATA published an "Action Research Guide for Alberta Teachers" and framed action research as teacher professional development, a "strategy to study educational issues [and] implement change" (p. 1). As a teacher with a strong sense of purpose I encountered a problem of a different kind: conducting classroom research as a practising teacher/doctoral student researcher. Ethics for this project was approved upon changing the timeline of my data collection so that I was no longer the teacher of my participants. In other words, data collection had to take place during the summer months when I was no longer in a position of authority.

---

[28] At the beginning of my doctoral program, I defined action research in my research journal as follows: a reciprocal and cyclical process of enquiry carried out by teachers (as peers), through in-depth discussion, critical reflection, informed decision-making and action, in order to seek meaningful improvement in practice and ultimately develop a better community (Sept. 12, 2002).

This begs three questions: to what extent was I no longer their teacher? To what extent did 'authority' play out (or not) in my research? How do classroom teacher-researchers need to think (differently) about conducting research in an era of tightening ethics procedures and rules? In a broad sense, these interrelated questions make me reflect on how I positioned – and continue to position – myself as a teacher-researcher in the context of this research project and in the Francophone community. Specifically, they invite me to ponder how a teacher and a researcher is supposed to "sort out" herself. As Fine (1994) points out, the task of qualitative researchers is to make their multiple subject positions visible because our narratives, too, are constructed, negotiated and narrated. Accordingly, qualitative researchers who "get involved" are "chronically and uncomfortably engaged in ethical decisions about how deeply to work with/for/despite those cast as Others, and how seamlessly to represent the hyphen. Our work will never 'arrive' but must always struggle 'between'" (Fine, 1994, p. 75). While Fine calls for qualitative researchers to engage in social justice projects, she also insists on the importance of teacher-researchers (like myself) to "work the hyphen" rather than "deny" it. "By *working the hyphen*," Fine (1994) suggests that "researchers probe how we are in relation with the contexts we study and with our informants, understanding that we are all multiple in those relations" (p. 72).

Ethical issues surrounding research in general and being a teacher-researcher in particular are complex. My purpose here is not to describe these complexities, but to state how structuring the research context as a mock classroom environment influences data collection, especially during the beautiful month of July, 2006, while not necessarily removing all notions of authority in teacher-student relationships. In any case, I remain a teacher-researcher "actively willing" to fulfill an intellectual obligation in seeking to understand more fully the educational problems (and privileges) in my professional context of Francophone schools in a minority setting (Labaree, 2003; Said, 1996).

Framework of inquiry

The data collection took place over a five week period in the summer of 2006. Ten Grade 7 participants, six girls and four boys, consented to participate in the study. After the student and parent consent forms were submitted by the participants and once a follow-up phone call to each household was made to explain and clarify the goals of the research and the summer data collection schedule, I invited each participant to the first of two individual interviews. The following are descriptions of data-gathering methods for my study.

a) Student interviews

The research started by conducting semi-structured interviews in French[29] to understand more fully how 12- and 13-year-old students were making sense of their mixed social, cultural and linguistic identities and to build on their life histories. These former students were invited to participate in a series of three 30-60 minute audio-taped interviews, which involved two one-on-one interviews as well as one focus group involving all of the participants. The first set of one-on-one interviews lasted approximately 45 to 65 minutes each, while the second set was shorter, lasting 25 to 50 minutes each. The focus group interview lasted 60 minutes. All interviews took place at the university. The purpose of these sessions was to have each participant discuss issues of language, culture and identity in general and the meaning they give to their lived experiences as Francophones in Alberta in particular. Student participants were invited to review the verbatim transcriptions of their two individual interviews. In Chapters 7 and 8 I draw on these interviews to explore the multiplicity of "Francophone" histories, memories, cultures, languages and geographies, and how young people make meaning and share their experiences of being Francophone (or not) in Alberta.

---

[29] Although I began each interview in French, I invited student participants to speak in French, English or *franglais*, as it is customary for Francophones living in a minority setting such as Alberta to switch from French to English or vice versa, or to speak a mix of the two (*franglais*). As their English teacher in a Francophone school, I wonder how their 'choice' of language for the interview was influenced by my mixed teacher identity and by school and community expectations of always having to speak French.

Interaction among interviewees was encouraged during the focus group session, not only to yield more information and insightful information (Creswell, 1998; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005) following the re-marking of the commonplace texts (which is described below), but also to connect the nine readers present and their contexts of culture, language, identity and (re)reading, "thereby creating a recursive, generative process" (Sumara, 2002, p. 242). The preliminary one-on-one interview took place about three weeks before reading the commonplace text, and the second one-on-one interview followed two to three weeks later, depending on the availability of the participant, but near or on the 'teaching' activities day, on July 21, 2006. The focus group was held two weeks following the completion of the activities day and after a third and final reading of the commonplace text, on August 2, 2006. The series of three interviews lead to the writing of ten life history narratives. Chapter 5 introduces the participants, and presents these descriptive life history narratives.

b) 'Teaching' unit

In order to share stories of lived Francophone experiences in Alberta, I had initially connected my research to teaching activities according to the Grade 7 English Language Arts[30] and Social Studies[31] Programs of Studies (Alberta Learning, 2000, 1989, respectively). I had developed a six-week thematic unit around the ideas of language, culture and identity; however, for ethical reasons, I did not 'teach' the unit during the academic school year, but rather chose to collapse the unit into three meeting days and conduct my data collection, including 21 interviews, over a five week period in the summer of 2006. Over the course of three weeks, then, students were invited to engage in various texts and with each other. In accordance with literary anthropology method, the reading of the commonplace text needs to be juxtaposed with other texts concerned with similar themes of history, memory, language, geography, culture, and identity in order to interpret human experience (Sumara, 2002). For example, we viewed two short animated films and listened to one song. Reactions to the National Film Board animated short, *The Owl Who Married a Goose* (1971), and to the Oscar-winning Radio-Canada animated short, *Crac* (1981), by Frédéric Back, were mixed. Overall, students tried to make sense of the meaning of each text, including the bilingual song *Destination* by Hart-

---

[30] I was their English Language Arts teacher in 2005-2006.

[31] The 1989 Social Studies Program of Study was the approved curriculum at the time of data collection. The new Program of Study for Grade 7 was introduced in September, 2006. I tied some of the unit's outcomes to social studies because concepts of language, culture and identity were at the heart of the 1989 Program of Studies on Canada, multiculturalism, and bilingualism (and still are).

Rouge (1997). I gathered information through observation of student responses around these curriculum artifacts to create a portrait of a changing Francophone community and culture. In Chapter 9, I reflect on how curriculum stories can be interrogated on Alberta soil and within the context of a historicized and politicized Canadian francophonie.

c) Student work: textual annotations and writing

I chose a picture book as a commonplace text. The choice of the commonplace text for my literary anthropology research project was important for methodological and analytical reasons, but also because my data collection was taking place during the summer months. And given the school-like nature of my literary project (i.e. teaching activities, reading, making notes, reflecting, and sharing), it was important to choose a book that was not too long. This is why, unlike Sumara (2002) and Sumara, Davis & van der Wey (1998), I chose a picture book rather than a novel.

I believe that Roch Carrier's (2004) French picture book, *La chasse-galerie* (translated in English as *The Flying Canoe*), created a commonplace for young Albertans to engage in personal and collective responses to text and to ideas of identity. I used *La Chasse-galerie* as interpretive text to engage my Francophone participants with a classic French-Canadian legend and with interrelated notions of history, memory, language, culture, geography, and identity. The juvenile fiction picture book, recommended for ages 9 to 12, is retold by Roch Carrier, the beloved author of the Canadian classic, *The Hockey Sweater* (also about notions of language, culture and identity, and part of an Alberta Education authorized anthology for Grade 7 English Language Arts). *La Chasse-galerie* is a folktale about lonely men working in the deep forests of Québec who make a pact with the Devil to be home for New Year's Eve celebrations. It is a flying canoe that carries the hardworking men home.

Many French Canadians are fond of this story because, like Carrier, we were told this story many times over the years and, often, a male relative would have worked as a lumberjack in workcamps, travelling long distances and working in tough climes and conditions. My maternal grandfather was one such man. As a Grade 8 student at a French Roman Catholic school in Sudbury, Ontario, I was taught *La chasse-galerie* as one of 'our' legends. I remember the story, part of our French anthology, fascinating me and my classmates, at a time when we were recently confirmed and still somewhat fearful of God. I also remember feeling proud that we had our own story, a magical story, and feeling comforted by a mystic canoe, because I had often canoed on the lakes of northern Ontario. Above all, the folktale was also familiar to English-Canadians and, thus, in my young mind it was truly legendary. Given the popularity of *La Chasse-galerie* in portraying a predominant historical French-Canadian narrative in Canada, I wondered how my former Grade 7 students, an ethnoculturally diverse group, would respond individually and collectively to such a mythical text given our changing circumstances.

During Phase 1 (the first meeting) of the literary anthropology study, I read the picture book aloud to the seven out of ten participants who attended, and invited them to take notes in their own copy of the commonplace text (Sumara, 2002). For example, they could mark interesting words and passages, favourite quotes, and their feelings, general impressions, and reactions to the characters and events. For the research method to be successful, according to Sumara (2002), the reader must be able to mark and remark the text that is being read.

During Phase 2, which occurred near the second set of individual interviews, students had about two weeks to reflect upon the commonplace text. At the beginning of the second meeting, we re-read the story and I invited students to re-mark their picture book with additional annotations to develop an "archive of data" that emphasizes the historical and contextual aspects of the readers' interpretive accounts and practices (Sumara, 2002, p. 241). Phase 2 concluded with teaching activities that supported responses to various texts (e.g. animated short films, songs) in order to reflect upon and help make sense of their own experiences – past, present or future (Sumara, 2002). During Phase 3 (our third and final meeting), we re-read the story so that students could re-examine their initial and follow-up responses to the text and discuss how they met the text in different ways during the focus group at the end of the study.

d) Research journal

I kept an ongoing research journal to better understand my own responses to teaching and my reflections to student (and teacher) learning. In particular, I wanted to see the ways I was creating curriculum around ideas of language, culture and identity. For Pinar (2004), curriculum becomes an opportunity for engagement, reflection, action and realization. Alberta Learning (2001) encourages that "l'élève, l'école et la salle de classe créent une pédagogie appropriée" – i.e. create appropriate teaching methods in the context of Francophone education (p. 22). Therefore, I kept track of what seemed to work and what did not. I also wanted to see some of the ways students engaged, interpreted and responded to individual and collective insights. Overall, I wanted to learn how literary anthropology works as a teaching strategy and creates learning opportunities for both students and their teacher (Sumara, Davis & van der Wey, 1998).

Identification of themes

The identification of themes based on my qualitative data was important to discern where questions of language, culture and identity lay and how they inform my poststructural inquiry. My themes came largely from three sources: the 21 interview transcripts (20 individual interviews and 1 focus group), my prior personal and professional experiences as a Francophone teacher-researcher living and working outside Québec, and my theoretical understanding of Francophone identity and Francophone education in Canada.

I began with the three overarching themes of language, culture and identity because these represent the three pillars in the Francophone school context and because they are central to educational policies, curriculum documents and theoretical perspectives on Francophone schools and communities in minority settings in Canada (e.g. Alberta Education, 2005; Alberta Learning, 2001; Bernard, 1997; Dallaire & Roma, 2003; Dalley, 2006; Gérin-Lajoie, 2006; Landry, Deveau & Allard, 2006). Because my inquiry focussed on students in Alberta's Francophone school context, I turned to Alberta Learning's framework for French First Language Education called "Affirming Francophone Education: Foundations and Directions" (2001). While the focus of this framework is on the role and mandate of Francophone education in Alberta, it also points to other "components" such as belonging, community, citizenship, and the Francophone school itself. I therefore considered these themes as well.

Furthermore, some themes were established during one-on-one interviews. In asking students to identify who they are, and then probing them to consider how they go about defining who and what is 'Franco-Albertan' other sub-themes emerged, namely the difficulty of identifying Franco-Albertan identity, the positive attributes of Francophone immigration and Canadian multiculturalism, and the expression of loss (e.g. language loss, loss of culture, loss of family connections, loss of a sense of place). For Ryan & Bernard (2003), "conceptual linking of expressions" can be described as themes because, while some themes are broad, others are "very specific kinds of expression [that] can be linked to abstract constructs" (pp. 87-88).

As I transcribed the interview tapes and proofread the transcriptions, I began bolding key phrases in the students' responses. What was repeated was important, such as speaking French and maintaining one's French, defying teachers who encourage them to speak French, and feeling proud to be Francophone. Although commitment and resistance are obvious sub-themes to me, I was reminded to pay attention to "ordinary language" while I was typing, bolding and proofreading, because De Certeau's (1988) conceptualization of strategies and tactics, for instance, can help me understand my participants' "ways of operating." What struck me was also important: students' strong sense of place, their desire for a place because of a perceived and felt sense of landlessness as Francophones outside Québec, and their need for recognition as French-speaking Canadians in Alberta. As I began cutting and pasting student responses under themes of language, culture, and Francophone identity, I quickly realized that the "components" blurred and could not be separated into neat categories. The themes overlapped to such an extent that they confirmed the policy foundations and curriculum directions of the Francophone school system in a minority setting and, in turn, the need to be mindful and critical of the discourses embedded in narratives of Francophone education.

Emergence of dual perspectives: Poststructuralism and postcolonialism

The aim of my poststructural inquiry is to seek a deeper understanding of the plurality and complexity of (youth) narratives within the 'Franco-Albertan' lived experience. The interpretive process was multi-fold: contextual, dialogic, and poststructural (Behar, 1996; Chambers, 2004; Saukko, 2005). Poststructuralism has provided strong pedagogical and theoretical perspectives for me throughout this inquiry. As I attempted to interpret the data (a combination of student and family histories, memories, languages, cultures, and geographies) through my writing of their life history narratives and my quest to understand their insights more fully, I was led to pursue the interpretive process in the spirit of poststructuralism and turn to postcolonialism because my students' words pointed me in this direction. While I further elaborate on the connection between poststructuralism and postcolonialism in the following chapter, I needed to reconsider how discourses of the institutional Francophonie and the community francophonie (locally, nationally and internationally) position the priorities and problems of a changing Francophone world. Re-reading my students' responses from postcolonial perspectives meant better understanding how they perceive their world(s) – both past and present, here and there – because my participants, an ethnoculturally diverse group of Francophones, described their experiences of living in-between languages, cultures and homes, thus positioning themselves and the category "Francophone" in different ways. This is why I have added Chapter 7, entitled *A Postcolonial Interlude*. In true poststructural fashion, I remained open to what was yet to come. Belsey's (2002) words taunt me still: "Are you able to think beyond the limits of what is already recognizable? Is it possible to acknowledge the hitherto unknown?" (p. 104). Accordingly, I should not be surprised by a new orientation but, rather, be open to the possibility of another theoretical perspective emerging out of my data.

The interpretive process – at once poststructural and postcolonial – unfolded for me before, during and after collecting the data, which speaks to the poststructural possibility of acknowledging the postcolonial, previously not considered, but an undeniable perspective in the lived experiences of my students. Given Denzin & Lincoln's (2000) call for qualitative researchers to be *bricoleurs*, I lean more towards the metaphor of *montage*, than *bricolage*. In describing the interpretive practices of qualitative research as *montage*, they refer to *pentimento* because, like *montage*, traces of earlier painting are rendered visible on a canvas. Oil paintings in particular have the effect of pentimento, that is, while later layers of paint have been applied to a canvas, visible traces of an underpainting shows through; in fact, the underpainting persists despite alterations to the work of art (Oxford, 2007). For example, Donald (2004) finds the metaphor of *pentimento* useful when reflecting on the colonial layers of histories and memories that have obscured Aboriginal perspectives and identities on the Canadian canvas. While Donald is interested in making the different layers visible, especially local Aboriginal ones, I am preoccupied with the postcolonial persistence of the global historical Francophone underpainting to show through. I am interested in rendering the many layers of the *over*painting visible, too, because it is the dominant Franco-Albertan/French-Canadian image that is obscuring the emergent painting. In an attempt to create a new picture of the Albertan francophonie, it is important to pay attention to the traces of the overpainting and the underpainting because, not only will they represent the passage of time (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 4), but because they will also complicate the postcolonial puzzle by comparing and contrasting places, empires, and legacies simultaneously. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2000), a qualitative researcher who uses *montage* strives for a sense of simultaneity, complexity and urgency in creating a picture having multiple perspectives in the same place, at the same time (so to speak). For example, she

> stitches, edits, and puts slices of reality together. This process creates and brings psychological and emotional unity to an interpretive experience. [...] Many different things are going on at the same time—different voices, different perspectives, points of views, angles of vision. Like performance texts, works that use *montage* simultaneously create and enact moral meaning. They move from the personal to the political, the local to the historical and the cultural. These are dialogical texts. (p. 5).

Because *montage* is dialogical, as Denzin & Lincoln (2000) suggest, it can create a space where the relationship between reader and writer is fraught with mutual concessions and compromises. Take it or leave it. Explore different perspectives of being Francophone in Alberta, view it from your reality, put your linear version of history on hold, and consider competing visions of who is Albertan, Canadian, and Francophone. Construct the interpretations you want: build upon what you know, question what you didn't and why, and prepare to shape your sense of situation differently because *montage* "create[s] the sense that images, sounds, and understandings are blending together, overlapping, forming a composite, a new creation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 4).

For me, *montage* becomes a metaphor that can bridge poststructuralism and postcolonialism. It names an interpretive practice that goes beyond representation in the sense that it questions its context, its politics, its power. The idea of *montage* is useful to my research because its focus is not singular; rather, it is plural, complex, self-reflexive, unfolding, and alternative. Fine (1994), a poststructural writer, reminds me that experiences are "profoundly intersectional" and that humanity is extremely complex, while Young (2003), a postcolonial writer, invites readers to "deliberately juxtapose" lived daily experiences of people who are all-too-often invisible because their stories "stage the contradictions of the history of the present, by catching its images fleetingly at a standstill" (p. 8). A poststructural and postcolonial *montage*, therefore, can juxtapose youth narratives *in relation* to various contexts *against* a backdrop of competing discursive practices of identity *within* a plural Canada precipitated by globalization. By exploring "the life of metaphor," a teacher-researcher may bring together theoretical perspectives and lived experiences, and blend and build upon them in new and alternative ways (Fine, 1994).

Mapping student narratives as a polyphonic francophonie

What insights do student stories of lived Francophone experiences in Alberta offer about the francophonie, about curriculum, about accelerating pluralism? My research project seeks to understand this question. With the help of ten of my former students, I draw on the data collected, primarily 20 one-on-one interviews and one focus group interview, to explore and discuss their lived experiences. The 12- and 13-year-old participants and their life history narratives are presented in Chapter 5, called Introducing the Participants.

Rather than map the Francophone landscape of memory in a linear thematic fashion, I have selected six out of the ten student narratives as "archetypes" to be interwoven for in-depth analysis. I have chosen six narratives to listen to collectively because they (re)present the traditional and emerging communities of Francophones here in Alberta, Canada. I term the traditional Franco-Albertan community as one archetype because the *Franco-Albertain de souche*[32] is the historical 'French Canadian' identity by which other Francophone identities in Alberta are considered. I term the traditional Québécois community as another archetype because the story of Canada tends to be written as 'English Canada' and Québec; thus, exploring and explaining the Franco-Albertan narrative necessarily involves Québec because ideas of the French language, 'French-Canadian' culture and identity are in relation to this place. I term the emerging Francophone community as a third archetype because their voices are perceived as problematic in the ongoing struggle of who the 'real' Franco-Albertan is.

Based on my theoretical understanding of Francophone identity and based on the richness of my data collection, then, I have selected the following student narratives forming three multilayered archetypal poles:

- Léonie, *Franco-Albertaine* (*de souche*), and Jean-Michel, Alberta born and raised, who also calls himself *Franco-Albertain*, thus putting into question Franco-Albertan "souchitude"[33];
- Brian, *Québécois*, who is reluctant to call himself *Franco-Albertain*;
- Karen, *Franco-Rwandaise*, and Sophie, "*Franco-albertaine, Franco-ontarienne and Franco-africaine*," both girls born in Rwanda and newcomers to Alberta but not to Canada; and Rania, "*moitié Canadienne, moitié Libanaise*," born and raised in Alberta.

---

[32] The expression *de souche* usually refers to old stock, as in White and Catholic Franco-Albertans who were born and bred in Alberta and who can trace their ancestry back to the original settlers of New France.
[33] I borrow the term *souchitude* from Eileen Lokha (2005) in her evocative poem "*Albertitude*" (p. 3).

In attempting to explore and explain the lived experiences of Francophone youth from three complicated and multilayered archetypal communities, I will intertwine the narrative voices because I see the future of the francophonie as polyphonic.

I see the future of the francophonie in this way because the faces in my classroom are increasingly diverse and the very presence of these students in my school community entice me to listen more closely to their plurality, their diversity, their multiplicity: multilayered "perspectives and realities" of "Francophone" groups, cultures, races, religions and languages. My own preoccupation with creating a public space within difference situates my quest in, what Greene (1996) calls "the winds of multiplicity and change" – a two-part project of conceiving the francophonie now and how community-building might be defined. Aoki (1991a) is also aware of the importance of how insights of lived experience might help us pay closer attention to multiple voices. Heeding Aoki's (1991a) call of "in-dwelling" in the teacher-student horizon of sound and silence, I want to (re)consider how six voices – privileged and problematic ones – might resonate within a polyphonic Francophone conversation of identity, language and curriculum. Aoki (1991a) invites me to be open to the "stirrings of sounds." And I can't help but wonder what narrative stirrings will re-sound (*resonare*) within me and my re-search of unique (Francophone) identities in Canada's plural society.

A polyphony of Francophone memories, histories and experiences is perhaps the most comprehensive form of analysis for a teacher-researcher who has *tout à la fois* a fixed and hybrid identity as a bilingual French-Canadian/Franco-Ontarian/Francophone from Sudbury and Edmonton via Ottawa--Jonquière--Toronto--Moncton--Guelph--Vancouver--Lille, France and Paris. *Bref*, a multiplicity of sounds and silences, or voices, can provide a pluralistic view of the world. It also helps me to avoid simplifying identity because, historically, Francophone narratives have tended to stand alone, thus presenting a narrow picture of Francophones across Canada. But with increasingly plural Francophone voices, Other voices are emerging. Within the polyphony of voices, then, what is the Francophone community? Does it remain a series of unconnected narratives? Or, will these narrative voices come together?

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCING THE PARTICIPANTS

The story of what happened, or what did not happen but should have—the story can become a curtain drawn shut, a piece of insulation, a disguise, a razor, a tool that changes every time it is used and sometimes becomes something other than we intended. The story becomes the thing needed.

– Dorothy Allison (1996, p. 3)

There's a world out there; there are worlds. There are shapes of sensibility incommensurate with each other, topographies of experience one cannot guess from within one's own limited experience.

– Eva Hoffman (1989, p. 205)

La francophonie est une autre manière de concevoir le monde. C'est tout à la fois, penser notre identité, penser le plurilinguisme et penser l'universalisme.

– Xavier Deniau (2001, p. 6)

Telling lives, telling stories: Six narratives

These are the stories of six Francophone youth, girls and boys aged 12 and 13 during the summer of 2006, painted against the backdrop of an increasingly diverse Francophone fabric in Alberta.[34] Youth perspectives on Francophone culture, the French language and Francophone education are important to provide a richer understanding when grappling with meanings, historical and contemporary, of an evolving Canadian francophonie. Students' individual and lived experiences can provide a space to explore different and diverse understandings of the francophonie. Sharing "biographical particulars" that are meaningful to young people in a rapidly changing Francophone community in the predominantly English province of Alberta would, according to Chase (2005, p. 661), make their Francophone narratives "storyworthy." Their narratives become interesting because of the juxtaposition of official minority language and multiculturalism policies on the one hand, and the increasing number of 'Other' Francophones coming to Alberta and attending Francophone schools, thus challenging (often static) notions of language, culture, race, religion, and 'Franco-Albertan' identity. While exploring youth perspectives on bilingual identity has been important to Francophone researchers primarily in Ontario and New Brunswick (e.g. Boissonneault, 1996, 2004; Dalley, 2006a, 2006b; Duquette, 2004; Gérin-Lajoie, 2001, 2003; Landry, Deveau & Allard, 2006), by comparison, stories of language, culture and identity from new points of view and from Alberta experiences are only beginning to be told (e.g.

---

[34] As previously mentioned in the methodology chapter, there were initially ten participants, for whom I had each written a narrative. In an attempt to map a multilayered Francophone conservation in the three chapters that follow, I have selected six narratives. These narratives, along with the words of the interviewed participants, can help us better understand the multi-faceted experiences and meanings of historical, contemporary and emergent Francophone communities.

Moke Ngala, 2005). Greene (1994) reminds researchers to attend to differences and "unfamiliar perspectives." In making sense of an often "unrecognizable world" it is important for educators to consider "inclusive points of view" because they can help teachers "perceive alternative possibilities of life and thought for themselves" (Greene, 1996, p. 38). By creating spaces for students' stories, educators can listen more closely to multi-faceted student perspectives and the meanings they hold for the French language, the Francophone school community, and Francophone identity, in hopes of recognizing a shared story of an expanding community.

Writing life history narratives, or stories of identity, is how one comes to know about the world and about one's sense of who one is becoming (Richardson, 1997, 2001). Narrative as "world making" and "life making" (Bruner, 1994), as "endowing experience with meaning" (Greene, 1996), or "retrospective meaning making" (Chase, 2005), helps us better understand the complexities of lived experience and how people construct their identities, realities, and relationships. Moreover, narrative research can encourage social change. For example, previously unheard Francophone stories (including Rwandese and Lebanese) can be brought into visibility to open up the possibilities of crafting a more diverse Francophone (creation) story (Chambers, Donald & Hasebe-Ludt, 2002b), which not only connects history, identity and politics (Goodson, 2005), but which also challenges and resists grand narratives of being Francophone in a plural society like Canada (Britzman et al., 1993; Chase, 2005; Greene, 1996). Therefore, narratives of Francophone youth can help educators to see that "coming to know" curriculum, that is the need to explore teachers' and students' own lived experiences, is crucial in seeing connections between the discourses, politics and concerns of curriculum (Goodson, 2005). For Chambers (2003), in one's attempt to know and understand a place, it is important to know all stories because they are trails and maps to "the landscape of memory [that is] worth exploring and knowing well" (p. 107). Ultimately, all of these stories can help find one's way home. And such a quest must include, as Greene (1996) stresses, opportunities for different stories and subjects of experience, especially in an expanding community.

The student participants are connected by place, in the sense that they all live in the prosperous province of Alberta, where all six attended the same Francophone Catholic secondary school in a large urban centre during the 2005-2006 school year. Below I provide brief snapshots of the six participants selected: my purpose here is to entice the reader with these *amuse-gueules* – single-sentence snapshots that precede the narratives. The verb 'entice' is à propos in this context for two reasons. First, the Oxford (2007) definition suggests that to entice is both to allure and provoke, so when I think of enticing the reader, I think of the importance of alluring them towards a world of difference as well as of the importance of provoking thought in articulating and multiplying that difference. Second, Greene (1996) entices me – as a Francophone teacher and a witness to multi-faceted Francophone realities in my school community – to attend to a "diversity of perspectives and realities" and, ultimately, "diverging roads." For example, the self-identification of the six participants below situates these young Francophones in various spaces, which speak to the shifting roads of knowing self and other, and to the divergent and emergent viewpoints of becoming.

- Léonie, *Franco-Albertaine*, is proud that her Franco-Albertan heritage goes back over 100 years.

- Jean-Michel is a politically astute *Franco-Albertain* who is concerned about the environment and African immigrants having their qualifications recognized in Alberta.
- Brian, a *Montréalais*, wishes there were more Francophones in Alberta, and wonders why French and English are not equal.
- Sophie is a quiet and shy *African* girl who enjoys watching TV and talking with her mom in 'Rwandese' and French.
- Rania, of mixed *Lebanese and Canadian* heritage, is proud to be trilingual, although she feels that English is the primary language of Canada.
- Karen, *Franco-Rwandaise*, is appreciative of her good life, and wishes the same for others.

Telling narratives: Understanding Francophone identity

Each narrative re-presents two one-on-one interviews with each participant as well as a focus group interview with all participants, in which the students discussed their lives, past and present.[35] While I have written six descriptive narratives, or brief life histories, of each Francophone Albertan participant, together, their stories become part of a collective of Canada's and/or Alberta's Francophone story or, as Greene (1996) remarks, stories of community and difference "become part of the flow of the culture's story" (p. 42). And becoming part of a collective or flow involves interweaving stories, experiences and meanings that draw attention to Other narratives. Put another way, in telling their own story, they are also narrating it to wider stories of diversity, difference, history and community (Goodson, 2005). On the one hand, the participants cast themselves as young people experienced with the French language, Francophone education and be(com)ing Francophone in Canada. On the other, in telling about their lived experiences as Francophones in Alberta, they are (re)shaping their lives as well as the Canadian francophonie, particularly in light of the emerging plural French-speaking communities across Canada. Greene (1996) asks us, not only as educators, but primarily as human beings, to consider stories of plurality, diversity and "community-building." She discusses the possibility of an emerging space where people of diverse cultural backgrounds, for example, can "begin to find their voices" and "offer alternative ways of seeing and saying" (p. 29, p. 33). Rather than taking away from what already exists within the Francophone community, as Greene (1996) might suggest, community-building of difference makes possible for "more sensitive modes of attending to young persons creating themselves out of memories and images somewhat different from ours, but demanding recognition and regard" (p. 33).

---

[35] The first set of one-on-one interviews lasted approximately 45 to 65 minutes each, while the second set was shorter, lasting 25 to 50 minutes each. The focus group interview lasted 60 minutes.

On my quest to understanding narratives of identity and difference, I will introduce six Francophone participants and their experiences. A personal reflection will follow each single-spaced narrative in an attempt to highlight key themes from each participant's narrative. This preliminary analysis will reveal how the narratives play out and how my own questioning around issues/discourses/constructs of language, culture and identity illustrates the changing shape and future of minority Francophone communities. These six narratives will re-present three particular Francophone archetypes that entice us to recognize diverse young Francophones differently: a historical Franco-Albertan perspective coupled with a contemporary Franco-Albertan perspective; a Québécois perspective; and various emerging Francophone perspectives in an increasingly plural Francophone world. Together, these archetypal narratives can help us embark on what Francophone identities and communities *might be* in this era of change and difference.[36]

Léonie: Recalling Franco-Alberta

Léonie's Franco-Albertan roots run deep. Her family has been in Alberta for over 100 years. Her great-grandfather left Québec at the turn of the 20th century and settled in northeastern Alberta, where French-Canadians were among the first to take homesteads in the area. The family discovered, while helping another daughter complete a genealogical project for her social studies class, that their French ancestors came from Normandy and, in 1653, one settled in New France and married *une Fille du Roi.*

Léonie has a deep and abiding connection to Alberta and to her Franco-Albertan history and family. At the family cottage this past summer, she and her cousins found a book on the history of Francophones in northern Alberta. They were fascinated by the black-and-white photos of the northeastern town. Léonie is amazed by this Franco-Albertan history: "*Une photo, c'est like de 1939, right, ça fait longtemps. Wow! Nous, on était ici depuis les années, like, 1900...depuis vraiment longtemps. La francophonie, c'est encore ici [en Alberta].*" Léonie concludes that, in the future, other people could look at a similar history book and have the same idea as she—that Franco-Albertans still exist in the province of Alberta.

Léonie, "*Franco-albertaine et catholique*," comes from a large Franco-Albertan and Catholic family. She explains how "*la francophonie, bien, c'est vraiment important pour ma famille.*" And for her family, this means attending a French church and a Francophone Catholic school. While Léonie recognizes the importance of attending weekly mass in French for her and her family, she mentions that Francophone schools do not necessarily need to be Catholic. "*Toutes les écoles n'ont pas besoin d'être catholiques, mais c'est comme un petit bonus pour moi parce que, like, je suis francophone et catholique. Alors, je suis comme pas mal chanceuse [d'aller à une école francophone catholique].*"

Although Léonie is close to her Anglophone father, she is closer to her Franco-Albertan family. She attributes this, in part, to her Franco-Albertan family traditions and to the fact that all of her Franco-Albertan relatives live in the same urban centre. Léonie treasures Christmas and New Year's. There is the traditional *Réveillon* with midnight mass and celebrations at her grandparents until the wee hours of the morning. The extended family rings in the *Nouvel-An* at the grandparents' cottage in northeastern Alberta.

---

[36] Borrowing from Arendt's (1958) conception of plurality and the distinctiveness of human beings, Greene (1996) emphasizes the situated and multiple perspectives of the person, perspectives that are always "in flux" in an interconnected and forever changing world. When considering pluralism and multiculturalism, then, it becomes important for people to reach "beyond what is to what might be" (p. 27).

Léonie is proud of all her family traditions and her Franco-Albertan heritage, but sees how her friends' heritage may not be the same as hers. She also recognizes that her friends are Francophone like she is, but at the same time, observe different traditions. "*Moi, j'ai des amies franco-africaines. Une me disait qu'est-ce qu'elle fait à Noël, puis c'est différent. Mais ça ne fait rien, vraiment, parce qu'elle est francophone comme moi. Puis je ne peux pas la juger juste à cause de sa culture.*" Léonie also mentions how being Francophone does not necessarily mean being Catholic. She mentions how her best friend is Lebanese and Francophone, but not Catholic, and how "*on partage la francophonie.*"

Léonie is proud to count Francophones of other heritage her friends. She sees the expanding francophonie around her at school. However, with Franco-Albertan family firmly rooted in prairie soil, she would like others to appreciate that "*il y a des personnes comme moi qui sont juste des Franco-Albertains.*" In her view, many people believe that all Francophones are either French or Québécois, "*mais ce n'est pas comme ça.*"

Léonie's Francophone roots run deep in Alberta and (French) North America. The photos and place names in the local history book Léonie read over the summer bear witness to the Francophone presence and endurance in Alberta over the 20th century. She is proud when she learns some of Franco-Alberta's history because it is her family history.

For Léonie, being Francophone is primarily about language. Although she and her family are staunch French-speaking Roman Catholics, Léonie realizes that Francophone identity is no longer tied to religion like it once was. She is grateful to attend a Francophone school that is Catholic. She is also cognizant of the fact that her French-language school brings different Francophones together in Alberta. She sees the francophonie as something to share, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity and cultural practices. French, as the common language, allows that to happen.

Léonie has close friends of different Francophone heritage, namely African and Lebanese, which explains her observation of an expanding Francophone community. Still, as a young teen on the western plains, she feels caught between people believing in static and plural notions of Franco-Albertan identity. While Franco-Albertan ancestors may be Québécois or French (from France), as in the case of Saint-Isidore and Trochu, Alberta, respectively, or even further back in the history of Canada's French colonization, Léonie believes that Franco-Albertans exist in their own right. Her history book proves that.

Léonie mentions how she is 'just' Franco-Albertan. But what does that mean? When I ask my adult friends who are *Franco-Albertains de souche*, they have difficulty in articulating their own sense of what Franco-Albertan means. In an increasingly plural Francophone community, what are some of the pressures of being Franco-Albertan and preserving and protecting Franco-Albertan history? At the same time, what are the problems and possibilities of using the term 'Franco-Albertan'?

Jean-Michel: Humanity at heart

Jean-Michel is Alberta born and raised, and proud to call himself *Franco-Albertain.* One parent is Acadian from New Brunswick and the other, a native Montréaler. His parents met at a Francophone university in the Maritimes.

Jean-Michel, 13, is a responsible young adult, cleaning his lunch containers after school, helping with dinner, and being frugal with his monthly allowance. He is also a keen listener and a mature teen who dreams of doing something beneficial for society. He wonders what it would like be to support a research program for less-polluting vehicles or alternative forms of energy. Jean-Michel can easily articulate his reasons for taking action, quoting from various sources, including the film *An Inconvenient Truth*, the global warming documentary by former US Vice-President Al Gore.

While Jean-Michel is serious about social and environmental issues, he laughs easily. Indeed, his sharp wit and dry sense of humour will serve him well as a politician, his current career goal. After school, while checking email and playing games such as

Sim City 4, he listens to *Indicatif présent* rebroadcast on the Internet, the daily national current affairs morning radio show on Radio-Canada *Première chaîne*.

While Jean-Michel appears to be academic, he is just one of the guys. He relishes in the fact that the school vending machines do not operate properly, allowing him and his buddies to get four bags of Gummie Bears for the price of one. He doesn't speak of current events with these boys. They enjoy watching films like the American teen comedy, *Nacho Libre*.

At school, a heterogeneous and urban Francophone school, Jean-Michel is bothered by the amount of English spoken in the hallways. After all, he clarifies, "*nous sommes tous francophones*." Students tend to speak English to each other without giving it much thought. However, for Jean-Michel, who is fluently bilingual, it is important to always speak in French. He considers the possibility that those students who speak only English at school should not have the right to be there; to him, they are not proud to be Francophone. And he is adamant that Francophones should speak English only to Anglophones. He is also aware that, while his family always speaks French in the home, many others do not, often because one parent is English-speaking.

What preoccupies Jean-Michel is how wealthy the province of Alberta has become and while, at the same time, having the lowest minimum wage in Canada; showing no concern for the environment, and apparently no plan for helping newcomers. These are three main issues of great concern to this politically astute boy with a social conscience. Jean-Michel thinks it is "*stupide*" and unfair that Francophone African immigrants, especially those from the Congo who are qualified health professionals, come to Alberta only to be told that they do not have the right to practise their profession. To which, in a frustrated voice, he quickly adds how "*on a besoin de médecins*."

It is clear to Jean-Michel that "*le pétrole fait notre fortune*." For him, this makes for arrogant Albertans (and Americans), who boast a consumer society of Hummers, Conservative politics, and discontent citizens. Jean-Michel's thinking on unbridled consumerism is partially influenced by a TV documentary he watched earlier in the year, one that delved into dis/content societies. Vanuatu was listed as the most content country, and for this reason alone, it lures Jean-Michel to travel there some day. Whether Jean-Michel reflects on local issues of global importance, he takes issues of humanity to heart.

Jean-Michel calls himself Franco-Albertan. After all, he was born here and has lived here all of his life. He doesn't think it makes a difference that his parents are from elsewhere. In his eyes, if you live here in Alberta and are Francophone, you are *Franco-Albertain*. And why not, he asks.

Having lived in different Francophone communities in Canada, I have learned that Francophone identity is bound by a particular place and time. And so I wonder if all

Alberta Francophones in general – and *les Franco-Albertains de souche*[37] in particular – would agree with Jean-Michel's definition of Franco-Albertan identity. Can children born and raised here who, like Jean-Michel, have not known another *communauté francophone* or *école francophone*, be considered Franco-Albertan? Historically, *la souche franco-albertaine* originated 150 years ago, and traditional Franco-Albertan youth typically have French-speaking great-grandparents who were born here.

Being *de souche franco-albertaine* and speaking French at home and at school are two different things. Jean-Michel is proud to be Francophone, and wonders why others are not. English is spoken incessantly amongst students, and it is increasing not only among Francophone youth, but also in Francophone communities in a minority setting. What is the place of English in Francophone (school) communities? Jean-Michel speaks English flawlessly, but with spoken English so widespread at school, he seems to question a loss of identity in Francophone youth. Bilingualism has its place, sure, but in a Francophone school setting French should be the language of preference – it is for Jean-Michel, and it is the foundation of Francophone curriculum in Canada. According to the mandate of Francophone schools in a minority setting, Jean-Michel is supposed to feel strongly attached to his school community because language and culture are indissociable. But what if you don't feel connected, or are unsure of your (competing) allegiances?

His stand for French spoken at school is political. He questions the right of Francophone youth, who obviously 'choose' not to speak French, of attending a

---

[37] The expression *de souche* usually refers to old stock, as in White and Catholic Franco-Albertans who were born and bred in Alberta and who can trace their ancestry back to the original settlers of New France.

Francophone school. Should they belong? His stand on immigration is also political. He recognizes several strengths of increased Francophone immigration to Alberta. For Jean-Michel, we need immigrants to help maintain demographics generally in Canada and to help the economy prosper. Of note, French-speaking immigrants influence our culture by reinforcing the French language and making our culture stronger. Jean-Michel recognizes that they often come to Alberta via Québec, and so their French is very strong. And with a shortage of (French-speaking) healthcare workers in rural and urban Alberta, why aren't Congolese doctors considered qualified doctors here too? Jean-Michel doesn't understand why people are afraid of immigrants when they have so many attributes and they are needed to help shape the future of Alberta's Francophone community.

What I find interesting is that Jean-Michel, at age 13, is witnessing the changing face of the *francophonie albertaine*. He cites two key examples: non Franco-Albertan parentage on the one hand, and French African/Congolese immigrants on the other. As a young teen, Jean-Michel is preoccupied by questions of (identity) politics, which illustrates the interconnectedness of French-speaking peoples, but also the crucial role Francophone immigrants have to play in ensuring the vitality of the Franco-Albertan community.

Brian: Longing for home

Brian comes from a close-knit family, with two older siblings and two Québécois parents. His father had found work in the Alberta construction industry, so they left Montréal in 1999. Brian was 6 years old, and recalls how everyone was sad: "*C'était plate un peu.*" Although seven years have passed, Brian and his parents long to return to

Québec for good. However, the older siblings, in their twenties, have come to call Alberta home.

Brian loves to return to Québec for the holidays. He does not mind the worldwind tour of driving hundreds of kilometres from city to city to visit friends and family. There is the *Réveillon*, the traditional Christmas Eve festivities with his grandparents, who spoil them with sugar maple treats. *Les* "*gros partys*" don't cease between *le Réveillon* and *la fête du Nouvel-An*, as they spend sleepless nights feasting, dancing, and playing hockey on a rented rink with cousins and friends of the family. Brian is close to his Québec cousins who wish he lived there. When they ask him how he likes Alberta, he admits that he loves the Rocky Mountains and that he has made friends now. The main reason he would like to be in Québec is to be closer to his grandparents.

For Brian, it is rare that he speaks English. His mother prefers that her children speak French for fear of losing it. The family attends a French parish, and Brian seeks comfort in the fact that *Dieu* speaks and understands his language. The family dog responds only to French commands. Even when Brian goes on msn after school, it is in French. *Pourquoi* becomes *pq* and if English shortcuts pop up, a friend always takes the time to explain the codes.

Upon his arrival to Alberta, Brian was relieved to know that there was a school for students whose mother tongue was French. He learned how Francophones fought to get a Francophone school, and is grateful to be attending such a school. Though he wishes there were more Francophones in Alberta and more French... In his eyes, Franco-Albertans are not seen by Anglophones. It is as though they don't recognize them, or the French language, an official language of Canada. Brian wonders why French and English are not equal. Sometimes, Brian feels overwhelmed by Anglo-Albertans. He invites Franco-Albertans to act: "*Il ne faudrait pas avoir peur de se dire francophone*" and to speak French in public like he and his mother do. Brian insists that Francophones have the right to be in Alberta.

Brian cannot fathom telling someone to go back to where they come from. During the past seven years, Brian has been told by several Anglo-Albertans either 'We don't like French people' or 'Go back to Quebec.' And he carries these hurtful words in his heart. When in Québec, he sees how much English there is: "*Le Québec, ils offrent de la place aux Anglais*." Yet, Québec is the French province of Canada. Brian simply doesn't understand why there is such injustice between English and French, Anglophones and Francophones. He is so proud to be Canadian and to have been born in Canada.

Brian has become fluent in English because he realizes that to live in Alberta, one must understand English: "*C'est vraiment comme ça*." When Brian turns 13, he thinks he will begin to say that he has become *Franco-Albertain*, after having spent seven years in Alberta and six in his native Québec. But at heart, he is still "*plus Montréalais*."

The lure of Québec is strong for Brian and, although he likes Alberta, he does not identify with this predominantly English place. Brian and his family have managed to live in French in Alberta, which puts into question the notion of Alberta as an English province and the emphasis on the growth of a strong Francophone community here. Brian sees English in Alberta as not only dominant, but more than equal to French. He also recognizes that one must learn the language of the majority to enjoy the benefits of bilingualism and, in turn, integration. But does Franco-Albertan identity rest on language alone? Brian doesn't seem to think so.

Brian appreciates the endurance of the Francophone community in Alberta. He learned about their struggles in elementary school, which speaks to the Francophone curriculum's preoccupation with questions of existence, place, and language rights. It is common in Alberta that French speakers are seen as from somewhere else, which contradicts what Brian has studied in school: Franco-Albertans have been here for over a century. But what is wrong with this picture? Is it a question of assimilation, integration, isolation, discrimination or other? Can children experience discrimination based on place, even though they identify strongly with Canada? How do static definitions of Québec and the Québécois influence discourses of language and identity politics in plural societies such as Québec and Alberta?

Brian identifies strongly with Montréal and *la belle province*. But as he adopts a Franco-Albertan identity, what happens to his sense of belonging? Traditional Francophone forms of belonging to school and church ring true for Brian. However, Brian believes that becoming Franco-Albertan involves a question of how long someones lives in the province and ultimately calls it home. What happens when constructs of 'national' Francophone identity tied to place change over time? Overall, Brian's experiences and multiple senses of belonging to Canada, Québec and, with time, Alberta, call into question current thinking around Canada's socially and politically constructed

'French Canadians' and 'English Canadians' – and, closer to home, 'Franco-Albertan.'

The path to belonging is not without conflicting and competing constructs.

Sophie: Home is Africa

Sophie is the second youngest of a family of six children. She moved to Canada in 1999. Her mother left Kigali, Rwanda, Sophie's birthplace, for "better schools."

As a toddler, Sophie was excited about going to school. And so at the age of two, her mother sent her to school because she was so keen. As a young teenager, Sophie does not like school as much and doesn't know why. "It's complicated," she says. She finds several subjects "complicated" such as science, social studies, French, and English. While she finds math "easy," she doesn't like it.

Sophie's Canadian sojourn recently brought her to a large urban centre in Alberta. Although she already had aunts and cousins here and enjoys visiting them, she cannot help but think of the smaller Ontario city where she had spent her elementary school years. Sophie has advice to give to people moving to Alberta. While the weather extremes initially come to mind (cold winters and hot summers), she encourages newcomers not to compare here to "where ever you come from because you're gonna start saying how bad it is." Instead, she suggests that you should "keep your mind open."

Sophie really likes talking to her mom. She's not quite sure what they talk about, "but we just talk." Her favourite time of day to talk with her mother is suppertime, when her mother comes home from work. She loves her mother's lasagna the most. Sophie doesn't help her mother with dinner because her mother thinks she is too young. She's only 12.

Sophie never talks about her father. He died in the Rwanda genocide. No one in the family brings it up. She'd "probably talk about it" if they did.

Sophie would like to be a teacher and work with young children. She would like to teach in a French school. "The school I went to when I was still in Africa," she explains, "it was French." Also, upon arriving in Ontario, her mother purposely chose a Francophone elementary school, adding how "she prefers French schools to English."

Sophie speaks French and 'Rwandese' with her mother. Sometimes, she forgets words. "I don't remember and I would say it in French or in English and then in my language." However, her mother doesn't understand English, and "wouldn't really get it." Sophie wishes she could take a class to learn Rwandese because she mixes French and Rwandese. Also, she is concerned that "maybe I might lose it."

Sophie likes being in a Francophone school because she wants to learn both French and English, and not merely once a week. She wants to learn Canada's two official languages because it will be "easier to get a job." She considers teaching in either Canada or the United States. She is particularly drawn to Philadelphia. The 76ers, her favourite NBA basketball team, is there.

Sophie likes basketball because "it's fun." Sometimes she would play during recess at her Ontario school, although she is quick to mention that she didn't join the school basketball team. She admits watching a lot of sports on TV with her brothers and sisters, as well as the Disney teen comedy/fantasy series 'That's So Raven' about a teenaged girl with psychic visions.

Sophie is proud that she was born in Africa and speaks three languages. She would like to go to Africa, to be with relatives in Kigali and to visit the beautiful beaches of South Africa. If someone were to ask her if she were *Franco-albertaine*, she would say yes. She would also say that she was *Franco-ontarienne* because Ontario was "my second home." Most of all, she would like to say "I'm African" because "home is Africa."

Sophie and her Rwandese family came to Canada in the 1990s, and like the majority of French-speaking newcomers since then, they are not from Europe. Furthermore, they are from a visible minority group, which is similar to the majority of immigrants and refugees to Canada in the past fifteen years. Another trend with regards to Francophone immigrants involves their mother tongue. Sophie's is 'Rwandese,' yet she considers herself Francophone. Moreover, she identifies with the Francophone community and sees her future there. But will she continue to live her life in French, a major preoccupation of minority Francophone communities? Will she contribute to the community?

It is interesting how Sophie refers to 'Rwandese' as her language. She is keenly aware that she might be losing her Kinyarwanda, officially her mother tongue. She forgets words and realizes that she needs to study it more closely. Is she alluding to a loss of identity? She also wants to learn French more than once a week. This is how she distinguishes between the Francophone and Anglophone school systems. In the Francophone school system, French is learned daily; it is the priority. I must mention how Sophie's interview took place primarily in English. Does this mean that she feels more comfortable in English? What is the relationship between English and her first two languages, Kinyarwanda and French? How does this impact (self-)definitions of belonging to identity groups, whether they may be 'official' or not? I wonder how the discourse of 'official' language influences Francophone newcomers in 'English Canada,' especially when the language of the majority needs to be learned to successfully settle there. In what ways do these (im)migrants challenge the notion of an 'officially bilingual' Canada? How does the globalization of English compete with two home languages (Kinyarwanda and French, for example)? Does this mean a double-edge sword for French-speaking newcomers?

While Sophie recognizes the benefits of English/French bilingualism in terms of education and employment opportunities, her heritage lies with/in Africa. Throughout the interview, she identifies with the continent of Africa (rather than *Afrique* or Rwanda). What happens when 'home' is 'there' and not 'here'? For Sophie, the notion of home is closely tied to identity. And for this young adolescent who values education and openmindedness, a sense of belonging is deeply embedded in a sense of an imagined homeland.

Rania: Half-and-half

Rania, born and raised in Alberta, is the youngest of four children. In 1976, Rania's parents left their large port city in North Lebanon for economic reasons and better opportunities. They spent 10 years in Montréal before joining family members out west in 1985.

At home, Rania's family speaks English and 'Lebanese', to which she adds, "*bien, arabe*." Her parents don't usually speak French to their children, although they are fluent in the language. Rania credits her priest, for learning Arabic, as well as her family. This past year, on weekends, Rania took lessons at her Christian Orthodox Church in order to learn how to read and write in Arabic. The priest gave his students a lot of homework and handouts, largely due to the number of letters and sounds to be learned. She laughs as she explains: "*Il nous a donné, comme, beaucoup de papier puis des lettres et tout ça. Puis il y a comme cinq sortes de 'a'. Il y a 'ar', 'aa', 'a!'. Il y a tellement de sons 'a'. C'est vraiment le fun.*"

Rania will sit to watch television in Arabic with her parents. She explains how they have two satellites: one in English, the other in 'Lebanese'. When they watch TV in Arabic, she tries to read the script on the bottom on the screen. "*Puis j'essaie de le lire, puis ça prend tellement de temps.*" Rania strives to become fluent in Arabic, and read books like her parents do, but she admits how "*c'est vraiment dûr.*"

After school, Rania goes on msn to chat with her numerous friends at school and her friends and cousins in Lebanon. Typing can be a challenge because she needs to think in Arabic and type in English. "*On tape en anglais, mais quand tu le lis, tu le lis en arabe. So, on a des symboles : 2 = aar, 3 = ha. Il y a beaucoup de chiffres que tu dois mettre devant une lettre pour le prononcer en arabe.*"

Rania and her family enjoy watching popular Lebanese TV shows, such as Star Academy Lebanon, Superstar, and Miss Lebanon. Rania explains that Star Academy Lebanon is unlike the French versions (in France and Québec). The reality TV show 'Star Academy LBC' features a group of approximately 16 young male and female candidates from all over the Arab world. The fourth season, expected to begin in 2006, was postponed due to the recent war in Lebanon.

When the war in Lebanon broke out in July, 2006, Rania's parents were glued to the television. They watched the news, in Arabic, closely. Rania sees how angry her father and mother are. "*Ils sont vraiment fâchés,*" Rania says, but she does not understand what is going on and why Israel is involved. She does know that the bombs did not land where her relatives live. "*C'est triste. Il y a des personnes qui sont mortes de ça.*" Rania doesn't like watching the news.

Rania loves going to Lebanon every couple of years, where the family will spend several months relaxing on the beautiful beaches of the East Mediterranean coast, feasting on delicious fish, and visiting close friends and relatives. This summer, there were three family weddings in Alberta, so Rania had a chance to spend time with her Lebanese grandfather and aunts and uncles. Rania plans to marry a boy of Lebanese descent, just like her sister.

Although Rania will say she is *Franco-Albertaine* at school, the only place where she speaks French, she prefers to say that she is "*moitié Canadienne, moitié Libanaise*." She is proud to speak French, but recognizes that to live in Canada, you need to speak English.

Rania is first-generation Canadian and Albertan. Her Lebanese family moved to Alberta via Montréal. She is of Francophone heritage, in the sense of the world Francophonie, but French is not usually spoken at home. It is a language whose realm is at school. One of the primary mandates of Francophone education is to ensure the transmission and vitality of the French language. But as young Francophones become increasingly multilingual in a globalized world, how do schools help students nurture (read retain) their French and Francophone identity while respecting their multiple senses of belonging?

Rania identifies herself as Arab. She is trilingual, and her two dominant languages are 'Lebanese' and English at the expense of French. She is still very connected to her extended family in Lebanon and to the Lebanese community. With ties to multiple communities, how strong does her allegiance to the Francophone community need to be? And why is it so important in an era of globalization?

Rania and her relatives communicate on the web in a globalized Anglophone world. English is the ruling language of technology. How difficult would it be for Rania and her cousins to get another keyboard in either Arabic or French? To what extent would it work? In what ways are French-speaking Arabs assimilated?

The choice of Rania's TV viewing also speaks to globalization and the importance of maintaining one's heritage. Rania's family's favourite television shows heed from Lebanon, but Star Academy Lebanon in particular has its origins in France. Star Académie also exists in Québec. 'English Canada' has opted for the American Idol format, rather than the French one. The name of Lebanon's reality TV show may simultaneously illustrate the predominance of English in the Arab world (Star Academy rather than *Académie*) and the ties to France. Interestingly, Lebanon's version includes participants from throughout the Arab world, which is not the case of Québec's or France's *Star Académie*. How do these TV shows speak to Lebanon's and Canada's colonization, assimilation and globalization?

Karen: On the move

Karen, soon to be 14, says she likes her life. She has been in Alberta since late fall of 2005. Born in Kigali, Karen left Rwanda with her mother, a younger sister and an older brother in 1998. The other three siblings, under the care of an aunt and uncle in Rwanda, would follow five years later. Their father was killed in the genocide.

Karen recalls her father building houses in Rwanda. Her mother had several houses in close proximity. At one time, her mother owned seven houses, so sometimes the family would move from one house to another. Karen has moved several times in her young life.

The family would call southwestern Ontario their first Canadian home, after initially gaining entry into the United States. She spent approximately eight months in Michigan. Her mother does not like to talk about their move from Africa to North America. Nor does she like to talk about their identity. On Father's Day, sometimes Karen will ask questions about their father. She will also ask whether they are Hutu or Tutsi. When Karen says she is Tutsi, her mother says they are not; she does not want to talk about it. Instead, Karen calls herself *Franco-Rwandaise* because she speaks both French and '*Rwandais*', although French is her second language and she needs to work at maintaining her *Rwandais*.

Upon her arrival in Alberta's Francophone school system, Karen was surprised by how often her peers spoke French, compared to the two Francophone Catholic elementary schools she attended in a small southwestern Ontario city. Karen and three of the younger siblings attend Francophone Catholic schools. They speak French at home when they do their homework. As for the oldest two, they attend an English Catholic high school because they don't know much French. At home, then, Karen, her brothers and sisters speak to each other in English, although their mother doesn't really speak it. They speak to her, and their aunts, in Rwandese or French. Sometimes, Karen speaks a mélange of the two.

Karen's aunts, already living in Alberta, had convinced her mother to move west where there were jobs to be had. After eight months in Alberta, it is hard for Karen to get used to living here. She finds that people are very 'different' here. The girls, for instance, talk and worry about their hair and their appearance. At her Ontario school, girls were active, playing soccer and basketball all of the time. While Albertans are fanatical about hockey, Karen loves basketball. She was team captain of her Grade 6 basketball team in Ontario. She explains how she has three brothers who play a lot of basketball at a local park. The family, especially their mother, loves the NBA!

While Karen doesn't have any particular TV favourites, she does enjoy watching BET, Black Entertainment Television. One thing she found surprising about moving from southwestern Ontario to Alberta, is that BET is not on regular cable TV in Alberta; it is considered a specialty channel, while in their previous home province, it was not.

Karen also misses her best friend, her cousin, immensely. Karen's mother has convinced her sister-in-law, whose husband also perished in the Rwanda genocide, to live in Alberta. Karen eagerly awaits the arrival of her dear friend as well as several relatives. She loves to be around lots of people and those she loves.

Karen, a recent arrival to Alberta, had unexpectedly learned about the family's impending move from Ontario, and she didn't want to move…again. Her mother had moved the family several times in search of better neighbourhoods, better opportunities for the family. Relocating within a city and a country can place a particularly difficult burden on the refugee women who perceive a hopeful future for their families.

I wonder what percentage of Francophones are refugees. Statistics tend to focus on immigration, immigrants rather than refugees. We know that an increasing number of Francophone immigrants to Alberta are from Africa. A better understanding of the number of Francophone refugees is important to (re)learn and appreciate the histories and legacies of conflict and war, of colonization and 'immigration.'

When Karen speaks of her family and living in a new place, it is with love. The family is close: brothers and sisters, cousins and aunts. The men are absent. Fathers and uncles were all killed in the Rwanda genocide. Karen believes that she and her cousin, her best friend, get along so well because their fathers both perished in the genocide. More and more of Karen's cousins and their mothers are moving to Alberta because of economic opportunities, but also because a matriarchal family network is beginning to take shape here. Francophones in Alberta and their community organizations, including schools, need to understand the obstacles and opportunities for its immigrants and refugees as well as for the community as a whole. For example, Karen's mother needed to find elementary and secondary schools for her six children, two of whom knew more of their mother tongue than French because of an extended stay in Africa. How do issues of settlement influence questions of schooling and multiple Francophone identities?

Karen is not new to Canada, speaking to the phases of immigration. She and her family settled first in Ontario and adapted to life in Canada from a (Franco-)Ontario perspective. Interestingly, Karen sees differences between Francophone communities here and in Ontario. More French is spoken in her Alberta school than in southwestern Ontario. Karen was initially impressed by Franco-Albertans' strong command of spoken French at school, of junior high students choosing to speak French over English. This was not the case in her Ontario school. On the other hand, Black Entertainment Television is a specialty channel here, unlike Ontario, which has a significant Black population. Is Alberta distinct?

Karen is trilingual, and considers herself Francophone. In Rwanda, she grew up speaking Kinyarwanda (which she calls '*rwandais*') and French. She is also fluent in English. Theoretically, her mother tongue is not French, but Kinyarwanda. This puts into question the dominant narrative around who is Francophone (and Anglophone) in Canada. Newcomers like Karen, whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, can still be Francophone in Alberta. In Québec, she would be considered Allophone, a term that is not used here.

The enduring legacy of the Rwanda genocide continues. Karen's mother refuses to answer her children's questions about their ethnic identity (Karen believes she is Tutsi). Households are female-headed. The search for home can be a long and arduous one, as mothers struggle with English in a predominantly English province. Moving and moving on can take their toll. To what extent are Francophone schools and teachers prepared to welcome students and families with very different experiences and stories of identity?

Six narratives telling multi-faceted stories of Francophone identity

With these six narratives, we can see the diverging roads of the Albertan francophonie. These roots go beyond the borders of the golden prairies, the forests of Québec and the shores of Acadie. We also begin to know and appreciate the routes of the world francophonie. The histories and legacies French and Belgian colonization in Lebanon and Rwanda, for example, live on in Canada. And with a rapidly changing Canadian francophonie, notably in minority Francophone communities like Alberta, the notion of a historical Francophone identity is changing. Collectively, the six Francophone youth speak to the changing circumstances in Alberta and Canada. Their diverse and divergent voices help us, as Francophones and as Canadians, to better understand complex issues of identity, language, and curriculum in an era of accelerating pluralism. In these six multi-faceted stories young persons (along with their former teacher), by virtue of coming together and talking face-to-face, weave a complicated web of words, realities and relationships. In the following chapter, I take pause in considering how to describe a deepened, more complex and polyphonic understanding of Francophone narratives in general and of my participants' narratives in particular. In Chapter 7, then, I turn to postcolonialism to provide a theoretical bridge to help me make sense of the competing ways my participants perceive and explain their world(s).

CHAPTER 7

A POSTCOLONIAL INTERLUDE

We are at a point in our work when we can no longer
ignore empires and the imperial context in our studies.
– Edward Said (1993, quoted in Burton, 2003, p. 3)

Empire messes with identity.
– Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (quoted in Gikandi, 1996, p. 31)

Les zones de recours les plus importantes, mais également
les plus riches d'espoir pour la francophonie, sont les
anciennes colonies.
– Xavier Deniau (2001, p. 47)

Taking pause: A postcolonial interlude

This interlude represents the trajectory of my own learning as I attempted to make sense of my research. As I reviewed my data – the words of my 12- and 13-year-old participants – the influences of postcolonialism began to shape my understanding of the broad picture I was attempting to paint. Poststructural writers such as Belsey (2001), Fine (1994), and Richardson (2001) propose that qualitative researchers intertwine ways of knowing and of narrative writing, because language produces competing ways of giving meaning and understanding the world. As Richardson & St. Pierre (2005) point out, if the words and responses of my participants moved me – emotionally and intellectually – then, they should incite me to want to know more and to open up the text I am attempting to write (pp. 962-964). Taking pause, then, means infusing postcolonialism into my own thinking, for the porous borders and spaces of reading the 'Francophone world' tell me so.

Specifically, I would like to create a short space to take pause in how I will introduce postcolonialism, along with poststructuralism, into a changing Francophone world. It is important to examine the interplay of (Francophone) identity discourses in today's globalized world environment as it relates to postcolonial theory and the discourses of La Francophonie and the francophonie. I distinguish between the two (F/f) later in the chapters that follow because while these terms are used interchangeably, they are not synonymous (Tétu, 1992). It is by briefly examining conceptual and theoretical foundations that a generalized study on reading the postcolonial Francophone world will be fruitful in situating the multi-dimensional debates surrounding notions of representation, hybridity and diaspora, and postcolonial strategies such as living in-between borders. As I take pause in a brief postcolonial reading of the Francophone world, I will review the term 'postcolonialism' as a field and a discourse as well as elaborate on what I see as the potential relevance and limitations of postcolonial theory to my research project on Francophone identities.

Defining postcolonialism and postcolonial theory

In their founding work *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures,* Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (2002a) were perhaps the first authors to define and delimit the practice of postcolonial studies, which "stands at the intersection of debates about race, colonialism, gender, politics and language" (2002b, n.p.). They list the major threads and issues in the field as they stood in the 1980s. Some of the most contested and complex issues still include ethnicity, race, resistance, power, politics, identity and nationality. While postcolonialism comprises a variety of issues and ideas, postcolonial theory is not limited to a single perspective. Rather, it refers to a variety of practices and perspectives, ways to problematize power and privilege, knowledge and knowing the world, ways to affirm alternative epistemologies and ontologies in a changing world of lingering colonial legacies. As the aptly named book of Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (2002a) illustrates, 'the empire' is writing back because it is important to pay attention to the relations between different empires, peoples and perspectives of the postcolonial world. In the context of my research, it has become vital to examine new ways of thinking about empires not only because being Francophone in Alberta involves more than one 'empire' (i.e. Canada having been colonized by both France and Britain, and the continuing and competing legacies of these two empires) but primarily because ex-colonial Francophones from different nations, with their own varied imperial legacies, are settling here and making a life as French-speaking citizens in this predominantly English place. The changing demographics of Alberta's (and Canada's) Francophone communities call for a return to empire, which Burton (2003) describes as "not a turn toward empire so much as *a critical return* to the connections between metropole and colony, race and nation" (p. 2). Considering that being Francophone in 'English Canada' involves overlapping centres and margins, it will be interesting to see how the students' narratives speak to overlapping categories and constructed spaces.

It is important to keep in mind that postcolonialism does not imply 'after colonialism.' When the prefix 'post' is added to 'colonial,' postcolonialism describes a reformulation of the imperial centre to the colonial periphery and, in the process, a development of "new structures for group identification and collectivity" (Slemon, 2001, p. 102). As Dimitriadis & McCarthy (2001) make clear, the 'post' in postcolonialism is not to be understood in temporal terms, but "as a marker of a spatial challenge of the occupying powers of the West by the ethical, political, and aesthetic forms of the marginalized" (p. 7). In both definitions, the centre and the periphery are inseparable. Indeed, postcolonialism goes beyond the centre because its purpose is to rechart complex understandings of the local and the global. The narratives of my students, a diverse group of young Francophones living in Alberta, challenge the essentialist model of '(French-Canadian) Francophone' identity and disrupts the centre/periphery binary. It is important, then, to go beyond France and Québec because centres and margins are shifting with a wave of increasingly plural French-speaking immigrants and refugees.

Such a critical awareness of empires and the defined centres and margins can allow for a more open space to examine how a Francophone diaspora can play out here in Alberta. While the field of postcolonial studies is neither coherent nor uncomplicated, it does open up a field of inquiry and understanding of the social, political, economic, and cultural practices which arise in response and resistance to colonialism. Postcolonial perspectives recognize the historical terms of colonialism as well as the implications of historical continuity and change. McLeod (2000) thinks about postcolonialism "not just in terms of strict historical periodisation, but as referring to disparate forms of *representations*, *reading practices* and *values*" (p. 5). McLeod is not looking for clarity, but rather he is talking about historically situated experiences that circulate across the past and the present and that need to be recognized in hopes of continuing change.

Postcolonial theory, then, is fluid and engages new ways of seeing the contemporary postcolonial world. Postcolonial approaches embrace the act of "decolonizing the mind" in which new modes of representation are produced. In turn, postcolonialism offers a critical framework from which to problematize colonialism and traditionally Western views of colonial ideals. Postcolonial perspectives help us rethink and understand the world – both past and present – and explore new ways of seeing. And Young (2003) suggests we might define postcolonialism as a language, a politics and a practice that offers a challenge rather than a solution to a changing world. In his words, postcolonial theory

> is not so much about static ideas and practices, as about the relations between ideas and practices: relations of harmony, relations of conflict, generative relations between different peoples and their cultures. Postcolonialism is about a changing world, a world that has been changed by struggle and which its practitioners intend to change further (p. 7).

In an attempt to better understand such relations, it is important to pay particular attention to language because language reflects one's value-laden worldview.

In a changing Francophone world, then, it becomes "vital" to create spaces for the variations of experiences, perspectives and worldviews of others, or what McLeod (2000) calls, the "historical, geographical and cultural specifics" because "*different* preoccupations and contexts of texts [are] important" (p. 15). Therefore, postcolonialism is a *process* referring to the continuity of various preoccupations and colonial influences both during and after colonization (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002a, p. 195). It is concerned with articulating problems and situations, working towards alternative perspectives, always looking ahead. It names Eurocentric assumptions of representation and challenges given meanings of power, knowledge and identity, while also encouraging new interpretations of meaning and allowing for resistance, negotiation and interrogation. Drawing on the critical texts and concepts of Said (1978), Spivak (1995) and Bhabha (1994), I will bring attention to modes of Otherness, in-betweeness, diaspora and hybridity, which are vital to a postcolonial Francophone world.

Reflecting on critiques of postcolonialism

Postcolonialism has become an important field of study, deemed "current" and "fashionable" (Larsen, 2005), one of "increasing popularity" (Ashcroft, Giffiths & Tiffin, 2002a). However, critiques of postcolonialism abound because postcolonialism is a complex and rapidly changing field lacking consensus and clarity. Intellectual debate lies in the term itself. The 'postcolonial' is problematic because many different theorists take up their own critical position within a conceptual framework that is at once temporal, geopolitical, and sociological (Slemon, 2001). Postcolonial debate can be situated in a wide cultural context, but it can also cast too wide a net when dealing with the effects of colonialism. The term speaks to a wide variety of positions and ideas but in turning the world upside down, postcolonialism has a tendency to generalize different experiences of colonialism. In this sense, postcolonialism is "a vague, ahistorical, obfuscatory term that merely skates over the historical and political surfaces of various nations and refuses to attend to them in depth" (McLeod, 2000, p. 245). Postcolonial critics, then, need to deal with the differences of varied colonial and postcolonial experiences and continue to contest dominant Western ways of thinking and seeing the world, without putting their interests first.

Today, postcolonialism is used as a theoretical framework in different disciplines, but it most often referred to in relation to literary and cultural studies. Postcolonial theory emerged from literary studies in general and the study of 'English' in particular. The development of postcolonial literatures was two-fold: literature produced in colonized countries became worthy of study and inevitably needed to emphasize a different perspective, especially one that differed from the imperial centre (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002a). While postcolonialism has been adopted by different fields, it has been critiqued for its focus on academic pursuits. Larsen (2005) speaks of the narrow domain of postcolonialism, both of its use and study, describing the "intramural genealogy" of the term postcolonialism as "virtually restricted to the metropolitan academy and its satellites" (p. 23). In other words, postcolonialism as a field is neither unified theoretically, methodologically or politically. Postcolonial cultural analysis, then, needs to describe how it is conceptualizing the 'postcolonial' thus making a case within a field fraught with "the consequence of its pluralism" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002a, pp. 194-195).

Moreover, there are many variations of the term: post(-)colonialism, post(-)coloniality, post(-)colonial studies, post(-)colonial theory, etc. Adding a hyphen (or not) is also a point of contention. Larsen (2005) notes that the slogan of postcolonialism can be perceived as "powerful enough" and "troublesome enough"; however, due to the limited use of "postcolonialism" in everyday language, Larsen asks "How, after all, would one know whether to be for or against it?" (p. 24). Young (2003) agrees that postcolonial theory can be obscure and that "ordinary people" are not always able to understand the complex ideas and political perspectives towards which postcolonialism reorients itself. Young (2003) also mentions that the term 'postcolonial' itself is not critiqued because of its political nuances: "It disturbs the order of the world. It threatens privilege and power. It refuses to acknowledge the superiority of western cultures. Its radical agenda is to demand equality and well-being for all human beings on this earth" (p. 7). In other words, postcolonialism can be criticized for its language and its politics. Whether the confusing term has a hyphen or not, and identifies a field, a study, a theory, an agenda, a jargon or a slogan, one thing is clear: defining postcolonialism will always be steeped in debate.

The field of postcolonialism is by no means homogeneous or unitary. As Slemon (2001) writes, "there is no single post-colonial theory, and no one critic can possibly represent, or speak for, the post-colonial critical field" (p. 101). McLeod (2000) agrees that the term 'colonial discourses' needs to be used in the plural because it is "more accurate" to speak of colonial *discourses* "due to its multifarious varieties and operations which differ in time and space" (p. 18). By invoking theories of colonial discourses, the umbrella-term 'postcolonialism' perpetuates a sense of difference and ongoing debate. Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (2002a) see the "instability" of the term and its meaning(s) as positive because its contentious definition has sparked "a vibrancy, energy and plasticity which have become part of its strength" (p. 196). Therefore, postcolonialism must involve the reading and re-reading of different texts if it is to aspire to the contestation of colonialism because it comprises various perspectives which can be contending, complex, even contradictory.

Bridging postcolonialism and poststructuralism

While my interlude emphasizes the need to problematize Francophone identity (in the singular) from a poststructural perspective, it also looks at the complex ways being Francophone in Alberta from a postcolonial lens. I propose bridging the two 'posts' for two reasons. First, postcolonialism and poststructuralism both pose a challenge: they seek to disrupt dominant ways of seeing the world, problematizing power relations and raising different problems about language, culture, representation and knowledge. Second, both pose questions: they ask us to rethink received assumptions about 'reality' and worldviews, primarily our own. Specifically, they ask how can we find, in a world of unequal and uneven power relations, alternative ways of seeing, describing and re-presenting the world, self and other. In a changing world of increased migration and globalization, of shifting borders and spaces (real and imaginary), and of increased hybridity and difference, categories of identity can become unstable. According to

Gikandi (2004), "a postcolonial discourse informed by poststructuralism provides a powerful vista into the modern world system at its moment of crisis" (p. 98). For example, defining national identity becomes difficult when debates around multiple, hybrid and even competing identities, cultures and modes of representation come into play, that is, when an essentialized national identity built upon a uniform frame of reference is interrogated. Understanding the complexity and confusion surrounding the notion of ethnic pluralism and national identity, in the Canadian and British context (e.g. Richardson, 2002b; Gikandi, 1996, respectively), is important in a postcolonial era because not only is the nation put into question, but so too are the margins and the imperial centre. Together, postcolonialism and poststructuralism can help better explain why a singular Canadian or English national identity is not as authoritative as it once was, and how multiple narratives of 'national' identity provoke 'the empire' and 'the nation'. Plural narrations of national identity can disrupt imperial and curricular representations of the nation as objective, fixed and timeless (Richardson, 2002b). Going beyond poststructuralism, significant questions arise because postcolonial analytic frameworks advocate practices and methods for (re)reading the (post)colonial space in the continuing moment of colonial experience and cultural difference (Gikandi, 2004, p. 117).

In the context of my research study, revisioning constructions of Francophone identity in Canadian and Albertan contexts can be informed by both postcolonialism and poststructuralism because 'the Francophone' is constructed through differing worldviews in general and discourses of language, culture, and identity in particular. The interplay between and among discursive spaces of language, power and resistance becomes all the more interesting because it complicates how one goes about describing who is

Francophone in Alberta (and Canada) and what the Francophone world entails. Moreover, poststructuralism enables a critique of grand narratives and narrow identity constructs (e.g. Québec as 'French Canada' and Québécois as 'true' Francophones), while postcolonialism problematizes sociocultural and political realities of the French language across Canada and within the Francophonie, and of competing British and French legacies in the discursive space of 'national' identity and 'national' belonging. Put another way, bridging poststructuralism and postcolonialism can provide a more comprehensive way of rethinking Francophone identity and the multiple cultural narratives that circulate within a postcolonial and Francophone Canada. And because "Francophone" is a changing national construct within and outside Québec, it is important to also consider the plurality of postcolonialisms. As Sugars (2002) explains,

> Because "Canada" very clearly does exist [...] a postcolonial perspective may be the only adequate way of speaking about a national construct which is constantly under negotiation. However, the application of a single "postcolonialism" is an impossibility, which is sometimes a forgotten fact: there are many different, and at times competing, postcolonialisms in Canada. This, in part, is the power of postcolonial theory: it is fraught by the very discontinuities it seeks to address (p. 22).

Therefore, let us not forget that being "Francophone" in "Alberta," "Canada" involves various discourses of history, memory, language, geography, culture and identity, and how the terms Francophone/Alberta/Canada are taken up in different and competing ways in different places. Bridging postcolonialism and poststructuralism, then, can help in developing a critical response to these complex questions of language, culture and identity in Francophone communities in Alberta and Canada.

Conceptualizing Francophone identity in a postcolonial world

The ongoing debate (at once personal, political and pedagogical for me) of who belongs in Canada's Francophone communities tells us about who and where Francophones are becoming. While it is clear that the francophonie is still very much interested in issues of language preservation, Francophone education and community survival, it also helps us engage with postcolonial issues of language, representation, and cultural hybridity. And the responses of my Grade 7 participants on their lived experiences will offer a variety of reflections on the francophonie in postcolonial times. In the next section, the lived experiences of Francophone youth will describe *Alberta français'* many diasporas and these maps of experience will help us attend to the plural and postcolonial realities of contemporary Albertan and Francophone societies.

In the following section, which I divide into three chapters, I pose three large questions that speak to the ways in which the Franco-Albertan community (preoccupied with its own survival) continues to essentialize identity and the ways in which it can re-invent itself in view of massive change. The three questions that will guide the interwoven narrative analysis in Chapters 8, 9 and 10 are as follows:

- A Question of Identity: How do life experiences of the students involved in this study help us reimagine Francophone identity?
- A Question of Language: How does language challenge and inform our senses of self and of the world?
- A Question of Curriculum: How do curriculum discourses inform and interrupt narratives of Francophone identity?

These interconnected questions of identity, language and curriculum are fraught with politics, power relations and practices of representation that position Francophones and non-Francophones in different ways. While Chapter 8 will speak to identity issues in broad terms, the discourses of language and curriculum will be discussed in-depth in Chapter 9: A Question of Language, and Chapter 10: A Question of Curriculum. While it is impossible for me to separate, for instance, the French language from Francophone identity (because poststructuralism tells me that identity is porous), it would be useful to problematize 'cultural identity' in other ways while also paying close attention to how language and curriculum, in the poststructural, political and cultural senses, play upon the interconnectedness of history, memory, power and place.

CHAPTER 8

A QUESTION OF IDENTITY

Les Franco-Albertains ne sont pas sûrs de leur identité.
– Jean-Michel, participant

C'est compliqué à expliquer, c'est quoi être francophone.
– Léonie, participant

I'm not really sure. But I guess if you can be two things, then you can be three. I would be Franco-Albertaine, Franco-Ontarienne, and Franco-Africaine.
– Sophie, participant

How do the life experiences of the students involved in this study help us reimagine Francophone identity?

Rushdie (1991) writes that "redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it" (p. 14). The stories of my research participants describe a myriad of relations to history, memory, geography, language, culture and identity. Generally speaking, these student stories span four continents (North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia) and 400 years of history. Specifically, they portray the difficulty of describing Francophone identity within limited borders and spaces. The Oxford English Dictionary (2007) includes a rare definition of the verb *describe*, meaning to apportion or assign under limits. Anderson (1991, p. 7) suggests that communities are imagined, but that communal imaginings can also be "limited." Drawing on both the Oxford definition and Anderson's perspective on communal imaginings, it is accurate to say that although a significant number of Franco-Albertans can "imagine themselves" to form a nation (read community), 'national' imaginings do not necessarily encompass all Francophones in Alberta as belonging to *the* Franco-Albertan collectivity. On the one hand, multilayered memories and life experiences can disrupt what has been previously described as, or limited to, the French Canadian narrative. On the other, they can also help us set forth, in *other* words, or *re-describe*, a world of *other* Francophone narratives and imaginings. And this retelling is a necessary first step towards reimagining Francophone identity in Alberta and the rest of Canada.

Francophones and non-Francophones alike, especially those in education, need to come to terms with the increasingly plural Francophone presence on the Prairies for three main reasons: changing demographics in Alberta, changing Francophone school enrolments, and changes in Alberta social studies curriculum. In general, shifts in Francophone demographics in Alberta are influencing the social, cultural, political, religious, linguistic, economic and educational landscape of the Prairies. The Government of Canada, in its commitment to Canada's linguistic duality and the future of official language minority communities, including those on the Prairies, continues to target urban centres like Calgary and Edmonton to attract and retain more French-speaking immigrants (Canada, 2003; Jedwab, 2002; Quell, 2002).[38] What is interesting in Quell's (2002) national study is that, on the one hand, Francophone immigrants are "urgently needed" in minority Francophone communities and, on the other, Francophone communities on the Prairies have little experience with the integration of French-speaking immigrants. In other words, not only are Francophone minority communities failing to attract French-speaking immigrants, they seem to be failing these newcomers as well.[39] This is not surprising given that this ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic diversity is a "new phenomenon" for Francophone communities outside Québec. As Quell (2002) rightly points out, "In the past, these communities have maintained themselves mostly by relying on their own close-knit networks and, in certain areas, by the arrival of Quebecers, who are of similar origin as themselves" (n.p.). Furthermore, in the context of Alberta, the economic boom means thousands of families from across Canada are settling here, including migrants from predominantly French-speaking communities, including Québec, Acadie and Ontario, and who are having to contend with, among other things, the challenges of living in a "severely normal" English environment.[40] To better understand the deep layers of experience and memory that haunt our personal and collective notions of who is Francophone in Canada and who is Franco-Albertan in Western Canada, it is important to briefly review the current context of immigration and movement of populations. Here are some statistics that point to the complexities of Francophone identity construction in an increasingly dynamic and plural demographic environment:

---

[38] Until 2003, Citizenship and Immigration Canada did not receive annual funding for the explicit purpose of promoting immigration in Francophone communities outside Québec (Canada, 2003, p. 45).

[39] It is important to note that communities are not solely responsible for the integration of immigrants to Canada, whether they be French-speaking or English-speaking. For example, governments and the immigrants themselves also contribute to the success (or not) of immigration and settlement.

- During the past ten years, nearly three-quarters of French-speaking immigrants to Canada were members of visible minority groups (Jedwab, 2002, p. 29).
- An increasing number of these immigrants know only French, but are settling in parts of Canada that are English-speaking, such as Alberta (Jedwab, 2002, p. 19).
- Close to 24% of Francophone immigrants to Alberta have arrived since 1996, and about a quarter of these newcomers came from Africa (FCFA, 2004, p. 8).
- Based on Alberta Education (2007) statistics from 2002 to 2007, total Francophone school enrolment in Alberta's five Francophone jurisdictions grew by 40.4%, and in Calgary's and Edmonton's jurisdictions, total urban Francophone school enrolment grew by 47.3%.

---

[40] Filax (2004), in her analysis of normalizing discourses in Alberta and the production of community, argues how rigidly controlled the Alberta identity and environment are and how homophobia, for instance, has been "produced" in a "severely normal" province that creates (heterosexist) identities. Precisely because 'the Albertan' is influenced by powerful discursive practices, including gender, race, sexual orientation, culture, religion and so on, "a proper, normal Albertan" is narrowly defined. Given that the French language and Francophones have not historically been and are not currently part of this narrow

Considering the demographic need for French-speaking newcomers to counter low Francophone birth rates and to boost Canada's linguistic duality (e.g. Allaire, 2001; Quell, 2002) and considering Alberta's growing prosperity, it is accurate to say that these sharp increases in enrolment in Alberta's Francophone schools are primarily due to the arrival of newcomers to the province. While Francophone education in Alberta faces many challenges (e.g. funding levels, infrastructure issues, anglicized families and children), the profound demographic shifts in Alberta's francophonie are putting into question the very nature of the Franco-Albertan (school) community. Returning to Filax's (2004) discursive interpretation of Alberta as a place of the "severely normal" and considering the federal government's stance on French-speaking immigration as well as minority Francophone communities' unease regarding diversity, both non-Francophones and Francophones need to rethink who counts as (Francophone) Albertan. By engaging with the stories of Francophone youth in Alberta, educators especially can better understand the perspectives and realities of an increasingly plural Francophone community in Alberta. Moreover, social studies educators in particular are mandated to teach, from Kindergarten to Grade 12, multiple Francophone perspectives. Alberta Education's (2005) new social studies curriculum not only envisions that "the building of a society that is pluralistic, bilingual, multicultural, inclusive and democratic" (p. 1), it also provides learning opportunities for students to "understand the multiethnic and intercultural makeup of Francophones in Canada", including "the historical and contemporary realities of Francophones in Canada" (p. 2). Student stories can help us

---

definition, and given the ongoing political tensions between 'down East' and 'out West', changing demographics call for a redefinition of "a proper, normal Albertan."

appreciate the complexity of identity and help us find new ways of (re)framing the perspectives and realities of Francophones in Canada. Narratives of identity, then, can create a door through which students and teachers can walk into what previously seemed distant perspectives, via the interview *passages* of six Francophone youth. They are passageways for relating stories of how Grade 7 students perceive and construct Francophone identity in an era of change and accelerating pluralism.

The bilingual word 'passage' (De Villers, 2003; Oxford, 2007) helps me to envision reimaginings of Francophone identity. The action of passing involves moving onward, and the *passage onward* can help us with complex imaginings of Francophone communities. For Behar (1996), reconsidering people's life experiences helps the qualitative researcher to remain open to the possibilities of other narratives and future questions. Furthermore, the word 'passage' involves an act of crossing, which begs the question: How do life experiences cross the dominant Franco-Albertan narrative? In considering student passages, Chambers (2004) reminds me to pay close attention to these relations – lived and living – to better contemplate the complex crossing towards other ways of knowing the world. *En Alberta, il y a du passage (c'est-à-dire beaucoup de passants). Mais les francophones immigrants et migrants seront-ils de passage en Alberta? C'est difficile à dire...mais les gens se sentent mal à l'aise avec l'arrivée de tous ces passants. Parlons-nous alors d'un malaise identitaire passager?* Will the malaise of incompatible Francophone identities be temporary in this time of growth and change? Who will join my student participants and me on our journey of border crossing, of moving onward with the impossibility of articulating a singular Franco-Albertan identity?

In his essay *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie (1991) invites writers who are at once 'insiders' and 'outsiders' to offer their "double perspective"—in writing—to the building of a newer world, one that embraces uncertainties, incompatibilities and "infinite possibilities." And this brings me to a final interpretation of the word *passage*, as in moving from side to side, a verb often used in horse riding (Oxford, 2007). I, a Francophone from Ontario living in Alberta, can enunciate a sort of go-between position, straddling two Francophone social locations. As I am Francophone outside Québec, similar to my Franco-Albertan cousins, I am therefore capable of being considered an insider of sorts. At the same time, I am not Franco-Albertan, thus deemed an outsider. For Hall (1994), I must be aware of the multiple social locations from which and where I write – of my self and of others because enunciated positions of self and other are continuous and contingent (p. 392). Consequently, I must also think of the "doubleness of similarity and difference" because "the difference *matters*" (Hall's emphasis, p. 396). These are my enunciations of particular paths, positions and passageways toward a reimagining of Francophone identity in postcolonial contexts.

Blurring the boundaries: Who and what counts as Franco-Albertan?

> *Onze lauréats vivant à l'extérieur du Québec ont reçu pour l'année universitaire 2006-2007 une bourse d'études de la Fondation Baxter & Alma Ricard. Parmi les lauréats, on retrouve la Franco-Albertaine Caroline Magnan. [...] Outre Mme Magnan, la Fondation a reconduit la bourse d'une autre Franco-Albertaine, Laura Thompson.*
>
> *Le Franco*, Edmonton, semaine du 19 au 25 mai 2006, p. 6

As a member of L'Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA), I receive *Le Franco* ("depuis 1928, le seul hebdomadaire de langue française en Alberta").

The small weekly publishes short articles, positive snippits really, of the goings on in *Alberta français*. Looking at the announcement I cite above, this was the first time I was referred to as Franco-Albertan. When did I become Franco-Albertan? Who will (not) be happy to learn that I am Franco-Albertan? Am I Franco-Albertan? Could I ever be? In re-considering my self-identification, always changing and contingent, I wonder what my youth participants call themselves, as together we are all French-speaking people living in Alberta and all members of the Francophone school community. What makes us "Franco-Albertan"?

Towards the end of the second one-on-one interview, lasting between 25 and 50 minutes, I asked my participants what *Franco-Albertain* means to them. All of their answers pertained to language and place: the French language and Alberta. Generally speaking, their answers were straightforward, perhaps because it is what's most obvious (French-speaking + Alberta), perhaps because my question was rather closed. However, in discussing the particulars of *being* Franco-Albertan, the responses were more nuanced, complicating traditionally-held views of a single Franco-Albertan identity and subject position.[41]

For the six participants selected for discussion and analysis, three call themselves Franco-Albertan while three are hesitant to do so. Jean-Michel, who was born and raised in Alberta and whose parents are not from Alberta (rather, Québec and New Brunswick), calls himself *Franco-Albertain*. He also recognizes that most Franco-Albertans' parents are from elsewhere and of different ethnic backgrounds:

---

[41] I distinguish between 'identity' and 'subject position' because these terms are not redundant (Belsey, 2002, p. 52). On the one hand, complicating Franco-Albertan identity – in the singular – invites me to consider emergent identit*ies* of Francophones who are making Alberta their home. On the other, it is not sufficient to illustrate how 'we' are all the same ('identical') because Francophones in Alberta have numerous subject positions which make 'us' different. Borrowing from Belsey (2002), *Franco-Albertan subject positions* make room for inconsistencies, ambiguities and contradictions.

> *Je suis né ici puis j'ai vécu toute ma vie ici. Ça fait que ça fait pas grande différence qu'ils* [mes parents] *viennent d'une autre place, je pense. Il n'y a pas beaucoup de Franco-Albertains qui ont leurs parents qui viennent actuellement de l'Alberta. D'habitude, les Franco-Albertains, leurs parents viennent d'autres places dans le pays ou dans le monde. Puis...il y a plus de gens de différentes ethnies, d'autres places.*

In Jean-Michel's eyes, the origins of one's parents shouldn't matter, in part because so few parents actually come from Alberta. And he is right. With 60% of "Franco-Albertans" born elsewhere in Canada and the world (based on 2001 Census data), it is becoming difficult to define who counts as Franco-Albertan because Francophones from other places and of various origins are contributing to the development of diasporic cultures and identities within the Albertan francophonie. Alberta Francophones are diasporic because they make up an ambiguous collective of French speakers (first language and increasingly second and third language) from various ethnocultural, racial and religious backgrounds and having ties – primarily because of the French language – to a political, cultural and linguistic geography that is the *francophonie canadienne et mondiale*.[42] Put another way, the Albertan francophonie is a composite portrait produced by combining French-speaking peoples from different Francophone colonial hearths, creating distinct diaspora communities here in Alberta (and Canada). It is important to remember that these are not unitary, homogeneous, common, non-contested spaces.

---

[42] I define *francophonie* as geographic, borrowing from the original 1880 definition, when the term was first coined by Onésime Reclus, a French geographer. The idea of the French-speaking world, especially a changing "Francophone world" in postcolonial contexts, should be understood geographically because Reclus invented this term based on his conceptualization of the spread of the French language and, accordingly, French colonial expansion. This will be discussed further in the next chapter on language.

Rather, as McLeod (2002) explains, they are "composite communities" that are constructed: "Differences of gender, 'race', class, religion and language (as well as generational differences) make diaspora spaces dynamic and shifting, open to repeated construction and reconstruction" (p. 207). For example, within the Canadian francophonie and reflecting the family backgrounds of my participants, notable "Francophone" diasporas include the Acadian diaspora (*Le Grand Dérangement* of 1755), the African diaspora, the Arab diaspora, and to a lesser extent the French Canadian (Québécois) diaspora. Therefore, within Alberta alone, there are multiple and varied diasporas overlapping to create composite Francophone communities. If "Franco-Albertan" communities are indeed diasporic communities, which I believe they are, then it is equally important to understand what is meant by Francophone diaspora and how such diasporas play out in the context of *Alberta français*. In thinking carefully through complex questions in light of various and multiple cultural, linguistic, historical and geographical contexts, we can better appreciate Jean-Michel's insightful yet haunting words: "*Les Franco-Albertains ne sont pas sûrs de leur identité.*"

The term 'diaspora' generally refers to the dispersion of peoples from their original homeland (often countries with a history of European colonialism), involving large and small patterns of migration due to varying political and economic conditions. Diaspora can be described as geographical, historical and cultural, but as some postcolonial critics argue, diaspora is not merely geographical; it is "a central historical fact of colonization" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002a, p. 217 & 2002b, p. 68). Put simply, colonized peoples have scattered throughout the globe because of the legacies of colonial and imperial policies and practices and, in turn, diasporic peoples have sown their seeds in various locations of the 'empire'. By tracing narratives of Englishness between British colonies and its imperial centre, Gikandi (1996) illustrates how the postcolonial condition was and continues to be influenced by the tension between past and present, centre and periphery. Drawing from Gikandi's understanding of the mapping of Englishness in the postcolonial moment, the resonance of diaspora should be read as "the mark of the incomplete project of colonialism" (p. 14). Accordingly, diaspora should not be conceptualized in narrow terms; rather, it should explore more complex (and colonial) roots of dispersion because dispersals are not necessarily from a single point of origin, and it should also encompass highly different routes of dispersion because multiple diasporic narratives can illustrate the intertwining contexts and conditions of diasporic communities in the present.

For Klimt & Lubkemann (2002), it is important to conceptualize diasporas in more inclusive ways in order to open up the discourse and analysis of identity because diaspora "is a particular way of imagining, inventing, constructing, and presenting the self" (p. 146). By connecting identity formation to "the politics of the present" and, more importantly, to contested questions of identity rather than definitive answers, Klimt & Lubkemann (2002) frame discussions of diasporicity around complicated notions of home, belonging and imagination. In the context of my research, taking a discursive approach to diasporic identity formation means challenging how "Francophoneness" is used in general and what counts as "Franco-Albertan" in particular because all Francophones living in Alberta are connected to each other in very real and imaginary ways. Put simply, the "historical fact of colonization" along with migration, immigration and "Francophone" nation building in Francophone (school) communities, have created highly interesting and even paraxodical ways to imagine – and reimagine – Francophone identity in postcolonial times.

The identity narratives of my participants, as young people in a richly diverse Francophone world, all share the common thread of "Francophone" dispersal. To better understand how they articulate their experiences of living in this imagined and constructed space, it is important to look at the complexity of the "Francophone" case in Alberta, Canada because this idea of diasporic French-speaking peoples in Alberta necessarily puts into question two things: first, essentialized notions of French-Canadian Francophone identity and, second, the idea of a truly unified francophonie. And Jean-Michel's perception of Franco-Albertan parentage is a good place to start when discussing how a Francophone diaspora is played out in Alberta. Jean-Michel was the only participant who claimed an open and diasporic definition of Franco-Albertan identity, in the sense that Francophone heritage in Alberta can be traced to other roots and routes: Franco-Albertans represent peoples from "*différentes ethnies, d'autres places*". If this fact is so clear to this 12 year-old boy, then why is it not to others in the Franco-Albertan community? Or, does this 'fact' have more to do with the difficulty of coming to terms with how "Francophone" borders and spaces are shifting and being represented to self and to others? Blurring these boundaries means unsettling long-existing categories and underlying binaries of English/French, Anglophone/Francophone, Canada/Québec, Québec/Alberta, French-Canadian Francophone/Francophone Other, and so on. After all, postcolonialism and poststructuralism invite me to look beyond seemingly straightforward binary opposites of here/there and of self/other and to interrogate what it means to live in a time and space of difference.

Living in a diaspora in *Alberta français*

At first glance, the idea of diaspora – of "Francophones" being widely dispersed – does not seem to fit the province of Alberta's Franco-Albertan community and, I believe, this is because Alberta is often misrepresented and misread by Albertans and Canadians themselves, whether they are French-speaking or not. In order to understand (Franco-) Alberta's changing circumstances, it is important to reflect on how blurred borders of and shifting spaces of "Francophoneness" recast static definitions of "the Franco-Albertan" (and "the French Canadian") in a postcolonial context.[43] Exploring how the diaspora is played out in youth narratives of Francophone identity in Alberta can provide insight into the multiple ways in which being and becoming Francophone can be imagined, constructed, reimagined and reconstructed. For the purpose of this chapter, I will concentrate on diasporic dimensions of six youth narratives and interrelated notions of living in-between and imagining home. Also included in this discussion on identity formation is the place that notions of empire and nation occupy in such shifting and overlapping spaces because multiple centres and margins are increasingly intertwined. As Howe (2002) indicates, the waves of migration that "helped form the tides of empire" are not only multidirectional but are "even more complicated" today:

> they [the flows of mass migration] have still often followed routes first established in colonial times. And they have mostly reversed the direction of earlier imperial migrancy; going in the main from ex-colonies to former metropoles, or more broadly from poor regions to rich, from south to north, from country to city (p. 22).

---

[43] I purposefully placed quotation marks around certain overdetermined words in this chapter because stereotypes and assumptions abound around such taken-for-granted notions as "Francophone", "Franco-Albertan", "French Canadian" and "Francophoness". By not assuming what they mean, I am troubling these categories of identity and, ultimately, challenging what they mean especially in a postcolonial context.

Currently in boomtown Alberta, people from across Canada are leaving their home provinces to find work here, and this includes attracting workers and their families from "French Canada" and Acadia. I see this migration as an economically driven dispersion of Francophones. A more recent wave of immigration involves French-speaking Africans to Canada – *un pays de la Francophonie* – and, more recently, to the Francophone margins of Alberta, and while many of these migrants did not come to Alberta directly (first settling in French-speaking centres such as Montréal or Ottawa), most are choosing to settle here indefinitely. A 2007 Radio-Canada television documentary, *Karibuni Bienvenue*, presents the difficult yet hopeful integration of Black African Francophone immigrants in Western Canada. The one-hour documentary illustrates the difficult choices Black Francophone immigrants in Western Canada make, primarily based on whether or not to live in French or English, and the resulting contradictions of living as an African Francophone especially among the Francophone communities of Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver.[44] For me, this particularly hopeful documentary portrays two main diasporic narratives: first, Black immigrant Franco-Africans sharing a sense of commonality regardless of country of origin and current location in Western Canada; and second, Francophone communities in Western Canada being dis-placed with the significant increase of Black immigrant Francophones from Africa. As one Franco-African interviewee explained, "On oblige les gens de se redéfinir, de redéfinir la francophonie" (Patenaude & Moke Ngala, 2007). In other words, who are the Francophones of Western Canada? In the case of Alberta, where "Franco-Albertans" make up approximately 2.6% of the total population of the province (based on 2006 Census data), the Franco-Albertan population *de souche* (White, Catholic, and French Canadian) has become a minority, even among Francophones in Alberta. And for Léonie, who is from a founding Franco-Albertan family, it is difficult to make sense of this difference. Ultimately, this difference – this diaspora that is the francophonie here – can be recognized in the eyes of my young participants, including Léonie. On the one hand, the parents of five out of six participants are not from Alberta and three families originate from outside of Canada. On the other hand, the emergent Francophone diaspora carries experiences and memories of difference and my participants can all attest to this, albeit differently due to their multiple and shifting subject positions.

---

[44] On March 28, 2007, I attended the launch of this documentary at the Campus Saint-Jean in Edmonton. What Victor Moke Ngala and Jean Patenaude, the directors and producers of *Karibuni Bienvenue*, specified was that the integration of Black Francophone immigrants was not the initial idea for this documentary; rather, it was the "découverte de la communauté francophone par un immigrant francophone" but not

While none of my six participants expressed their Franco-Albertan identity in purist terms, Léonie – whose Franco-Albertan roots run deep – alludes to the authenticity of one's Franco-Albertan origins.

> *[Ê]tre Franco-Albertain, je pense qu'il faut que tu viennes de l'Alberta, parce que c'est comme ça que c'est.*

For Léonie, being Franco-Albertan means being from here because that's the way it is. Léonie's use of the verb *venir de* speaks to one's particular origins, coupled with her insistence on the particularity of Alberta (*il faut que*), makes her truly Franco-Albertan. While many Franco-Albertans *de souche* would be pleased with such a straightforward response, Léonie did not come to this statement easily. My probing question on the

---

necessarily a Black Francophone immigrant from Africa. But given the diversity of issues of displacement, *déracinement*, the integration of Franco-Africans became crucial to study and, thus, central to this piece.

possibility of Francophones new to Alberta (myself included) calling themselves Franco-Albertan incites this long yet nuanced response by Léonie:

> *Je sais pas* [si les gens d'ailleurs peuvent se dire Franco-Albertains]. *Bien, ça dépend pour moi parce que...comme plutôt non...mais aussi il y en a* [des francophones] *qui ont leur culture, mais ils sont nés en Alberta. Alors, je pense que oui, ils peuvent dire ça* [qu'ils sont Franco-Albertains] *parce qu'ils sont nés en Alberta puis ils sont juste comme ça. Ensuite il y en a qui viennent du Liban ici, puis je ne pense pas qu'ils peuvent dire ça* [qu'ils sont Franco-Albertains]. *Je pense qu'ils peuvent dire que « je suis Franco-Libanais » ou Franco-whatever d'où ils viennent. Mais d'être Franco-Albertain, je pense qu'il faut que tu viennes de l'Alberta, parce que c'est comme ça que c'est. Juste que tu sois né ici. Je sais pas trop, it's weird.*

Remembering that Léonie's Franco-Albertan family has traced their French-Canadian lineage to a *fille du Roy* in New France and, in turn, to France, Léonie does not believe that Francophone ancestry and culture must be from Alberta alone. She recognizes the plurality of Francophone origins worldwide and here, in her home province. However, as Léonie becomes protective of Alberta as the traditional home of Franco-Albertans, she defines being Franco-Albertan in opposition to other Francophones. For example, Léonie doesn't think that all French-speaking newcomers to Alberta can call themselves Franco-Albertan, whether they be from other parts of Canada or the world. At first, she has difficulty making up her mind about who counts as Franco-Albertan. But as she considers Alberta's diverse Francophone population, she realizes that some of the Others were born here as well, confusing her thinking. Beginning her answer with *ça dépend*, she moves to say *oui*, but then decides that being from here makes one Franco-Albertan, that being born here suffices. Ultimately, she concludes by saying "it's weird."

Living in-between: Complicating hyphen(s) and home(s)

In the film *Between: Living in the Hyphen*, a 2005 National Film Board documentary on Canadians who fall between categories, interviewees of mixed cultural and racial identity share their feelings of confusion that come from living in between. One interviewee specifically refers to the "weird collision" when you find yourself between cultural identities and having to understand that difference. It is not because my Grade 7 participants are either young (12 and 13 years old) or inarticulate that they have difficulty making sense of identity and difference. History and memory, coupled with living in between languages and cultures, make it difficult for anyone to articulate what identity formation is all about. And the collision between here and there, living in-between homes and hyphens, only complicates these matters. For Léonie, then, *une Franco-Albertaine de souche* who is witnessing the change to the historicity of her traditional community, it must be confusing to distinguish between here and there. On the one hand, there is here, the *Alberta français* her family and ancestry have preserved and protected for over 100 years. And Léonie, a well-liked and respected student who has close friends from various social locations, knows that other Francophones in Alberta are born here as well. On the other hand, she does not recognize their origins (*Franco-whatever)* as being authentically Franco-Albertan. Thus, the here is now complicated because there is here: there was born here. But, as Léonie has learned, that's not the way it is supposed to be "*parce que c'est comme ça que c'est.*"

I find Léonie's nuanced and complicated response interesting because she is living in-between (tensions of) a historical Franco-Albertan community and an emergent diasporic Francophone one. And living in a diaspora means living in-between and imagining 'home' in different ways. For Léonie, this means constructing a sense of Franco-Albertan home that is pure, unchanged, and unchanging. "*Juste que tu sois né ici*" alludes to an imagined *Alberta français*. Léonie's sense of Franco-Albertan identity is well-grounded in this place (*ici*) and well-founded in time, and her sense of belonging is closely tied to a historical *Alberta français* comprised primarily of *Franco-Albertains de souche*. The term *de souche* is an interesting one. In Québec, the preferred (and highly political) expression has traditionally been *pure laine* to describe *les habitants québécois tricotés serrés*, les *pur et dur*, the true Québécois. A less figurative term is *de souche* and, while it also has a negative connotation, it is generally perceived as a nicer term. For those of us who aren't nice, however, using *de souche* is problematic partly because the origins of Canada's Francophones peoples are numerous and who counts is more often defined within this representation. Still, the use of *de souche* persists in communities that are witnessing an increasingly plural francophonie. But as the narratives of Brian, Karen and Rania illustrate, *ce n'est pas comme ça et de plus en plus ça ne le sera pas.*[45]

If Franco-Albertan lineage or parentage isn't at issue for Jean-Michel, but seems to be for Léonie, and given the increasing numbers of ethnically diverse Francophone newcomers to Alberta, then perhaps the definition/perception of one's 'home' is. This is the case for Brian, Karen and Rania whose dreams of 'home' have been influenced by different experiences of migration. Although Brian currently calls himself Québécois, he is quick to specify "*mais plus comme Montréalais*." When I ask him if he identifies himself as Franco-Albertain, he explains:

---

[45] Jean Lafontant, Ph.D., dans sa conférence inaugurale lors du colloque intitulé « Les défis du multiculturalisme francophone en Alberta », qui s'est tenu à la Faculté Saint-Jean en mars 2001, a suggéré ce point important: l'avenir de la francophonie canadienne en milieu minoritaire sera multiculturel ou il ne sera pas.

> *Pas maintenant, mais je pense bientôt oui...parce que j'ai passé du temps au Québec et tout. Puis quand je vais avoir 13 ans là, je vais être plus devenu Franco-Albertain. Comme ça dépend...si j'étais plus longtemps là-bas, mais maintenant je suis plus ici. Là je vais devenir Franco-Albertain.*

Brian speaks of becoming (*devenir*) rather than being Franco-Albertan. Brian calculates the number of years in each province, from the time he was born to the time his family left Québec for Alberta. Although Brian was born in Montréal, once he turns 13, he will have spent more time in Alberta than his home province. And this concerns him because he identifies strongly with Francophone Québec, his relatives (especially his grandparents and cousins), and the traditions his family celebrates there. He feels comfortable in Québec. So when I ask him about the possibility of being both Québécois and Franco-Albertain, Brian is unsure.

> *Je pense que oui et non. À cause que, oui, je suis né là-bas* [au Québec]. *Et non, à cause que je vais avoir plus vécu ici* [en Alberta]. *Alors, je suis pas sûr. Je pense qu'on peut être les deux, mais je pense que c'est meilleur d'être une chose. Oh, je sais pas vraiment...*

Brian comes from a close-knit Québécois family and he is proud of his Québécois heritage. While he is open to the idea of being 'two things,' at this point in the conversation, he prefers to be one thing: Québécois. And being Montréalais in Alberta means that Brian's subject positions are split: contemplating the idea of calling himself either Franco-Albertain or Québécois is fractured in time (13 years old being the determining year for him) and in space (between Alberta and Québec). Although Brian and his family return to their 'homeland' on a regular basis, the result of living in Alberta means that Québec becomes constructed and, accordingly, Brian's Francophone subject positions are discontinuous.

By discontinuity, I mean the split that exists between the idea of 'home' and the experience of returning 'home'. Drawing from Avtar Brah's *Cartographies of Diaspora*, McLeod (2000) concludes that "home" is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no-return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of "origin" (p. 209). To 'return home' is impossible because, as Rushdie (1991) argues,

> the past is a country from which we have all emigrated, that its loss is part of our common humanity (p. 12). [And being] haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt [...] we must also do so in the knowledge—which gives rise to profound uncertainties—that our physical alienation from [one's homeland] almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands (p. 10).

For Brian, like Léonie, these two young people are creating Québecs and Albertas of the mind because they are living in-between memories of history and geography, between imaginaries of past and present in two distinct geographical locations. Bhabha's notion of hybridization is useful when discussing Francophones' sense of themselves because, like Rushdie, Bhabha (1994/2006) pushes the limits of purist claims of authentic cultural identities. In fact, he diverts our attention away from the idea of pure cultures to shed light on the 'impurity' of cultures and, as Huddart (2006) explains this diversion, "cultures are the consequence of attempts to still the flux of cultural hybridities" (pp. 6-7). For Huddart, Bhabha's insists on paying attention to the *ongoing process* that is cultural hybridity because it is what happens *in-between* cultures and identities, between self and other, and this is what is crucial to understand. To be Francophone, then, is to be in process, to be culturally mixed, to be and live in between – and to expect the unexpected.

Helping to create, or at the very least direct our individual and collective attention to, hybrid and incomplete Francophone identities in *Alberta français* is the increasing number of Black African and French-speaking immigrant and refugee families in the predominantly English province of Alberta. Karen, who moved from Ontario in fall 2005, does not yet feel at home in Alberta. Thus, she prefers to call herself Franco-Canadian rather than Franco-Albertan because she is not "used to here."

> *J'aime mieux Franco-Canadienne parce que je ne suis pas vraiment Albertaine maintenant. Je ne suis pas vraiment habituée à ici. Oui* [on peut devenir Franco-Albertain], *si on vit plus d'années ici et on est used to here.*

Over time, Karen may be willing to associate more with Alberta but, in the meantime, she perceives herself as Franco-Canadian. For Karen, it is a question of belonging, and as she still doesn't identify with belonging here, she cannot imagine herself as Franco-Albertan. Karen agrees that one can become Franco-Albertan with time, once one has grown "used to here." But Karen has experienced multiple geographical locations, both real and imagined. While Karen also calls herself Franco-Ontarian, because *Ontario français* was her "second home" for eight years of her life, she prefers to say that she is Franco-Rwandese. Karen was not only born in Rwanda; she also learned to speak French there.

> *Oui,* [je me dis Franco-Ontarienne] *un peu, parce que maintenant, Franco-Ontarienne, c'est ma deuxième...it's like my second home. J'étais là presque toute ma vie. Je me dis Franco-Rwandaise un peu parce que c'est où je parlais français. Quand j'étais au Rwanda, je parlais français aussi parce que c'était ma*

> *deuxième langue. C'est d'où je viens. Je suis née là. Je suis Franco-Rwandaise comme vraiment, puis un peu Franco-Canadienne.*

Karen's response to my question is particularly interesting to me because she speaks to a multilayered Francophone identity: home, birthplace, mother tongue, another tongue, another home. She also quantifies her response by adding *un peu* to each statement: once again Karen speaks to a sense of becoming and belonging. *Peu à peu*, she became Franco-Rwandaise, then Franco-Ontarienne; little by little, Karen belongs. At the same time, she also leaves the door open to become Franco-Albertan, a subject position contingent on residence. Therefore, identifying with one particular group or another involves a dynamic process of being and belonging, an ambivalent space that juxtaposes perspectives, places and times against each other.

Drawing from Bhabha (1994/2006), Karen's subjectivity, her Francophone senses of self, like her homes, cannot be fixed in time and space. Rather, they situates the here and there – 'home' – as evershifting (Fine, 1994), as imagined (McLeod, 2000) and as incomplete (Huddart, 2006), confusing the categories of Franco-Albertan identity and allowing for multiple Francophone subject positions in the same place all at once. Thinking of Alberta's Francophone communities as diasporic, in its fluidity, in its hybridity, "in its crossing of borders, opens up the horizon of place" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002a, p. 218). And it is in this place of in-between that Karen can be both "*Franco-Rwandaise comme vraiment, puis un peu Franco-Canadienne*" and perhaps never be "used to here". While Karen dreams about returning to Africa some day, especially to visit with her aunts and cousins, she would like to see how it is to live in Rwanda.

> *Oui, je veux voir mes tantes et mes cousins et tout ça. Pour voir comment c'est, comment c'est y vivre. Comme nous, on est plus chanceux qu'eux, parce qu'ils n'ont pas beaucoup de choses. Puis pour nous, don't take advantage of what you have. To learn qu'on a beaucoup et on doit être content de ça.*

Karen and her refugee family's experience of migration is dramatically different from Brian's, but both participants continue to imagine their homelands, which orients them in Alberta. Although Karen dreams about visiting her Rwandese relatives, living in Rwanda where she and her family are originally from, being in Canada has helped her develop a sense of being in a privileged place, although where she belongs is still being negotiated – between Africa and Canada, between Ontario and Alberta, between there and here.

Rania, who was born and raised in Alberta, imagines Lebanon – her parents' homeland – as her own. During both individual interviews, she speaks of Lebanon often, more so than of Alberta, and dreams of her family's extended stays in this warm and beautiful place.

> *Oui, j'adore aller au Liban parce que toute ma famille est là. Puis la température, puis les beach, puis les océans, puis tous les... ya. Puis le manger, c'est tellement bon. Le poisson là, c'est vraiment bon.*

Her emotional attachment to Lebanon is strong and as her responses illustrate, experiences of migrancy affect both the migrant parents and their Canadian-born children because the families have constructed how they think about their 'home' and Alberta, where they live. How Rania, along with the other young Francophones, see 'home' impacts the local Francophone community because their way of being in the world can be problematic for a community which imagines itself as here – and as unified. When I ask Rania how she identifies herself, she gives this response:

> *Je suis moitié-moitié. Moitié Canadienne, moitié Libanaise. Je ne dis pas francophone en général. Parce que ça, c'est juste comme juste comment je le dis.*

> *Franco, ça ne va pas vraiment dans ma tête. Parce que je parle seulement français quand je suis à l'école ou avec quelqu'un qui parle français.*

For Rania, then, who longs to be in Lebanon, speaking French and attending a Francophone school do not seem to help her develop a sense of belonging here – to *l'Alberta français*. And this discontinuity not only contradicts the role of the Francophone school, but illustrates how the construct of 'home' represents a "disjunction between here and there" and "a fractured, discontinuous relationship with the present" (McLeod, 2000, p. 211). Rania's response displaces the Francophone (school) community of Alberta because Rania herself occupies a displaced position within two constructed and fractured spaces: home and school. Her 'home' is lodged in memory, like the others, but her imaginary homeland not only houses individual ideas of belonging, her sense of self as *not* being Francophone disrupts the very notion of Franco-Albertan community and collectivity *as one*. Alberta's francophonie is disrupted by personal memories and by the diasporic present, whether it be French Canadian, African or Arab, or overlapping fragments of these diasporas.

In general, my participants speak to the Canadian identity question "Where is here?" and to the postcolonial condition of imagining homelands and living in-between borders. While they all live in between places (places with particular histories, languages and cultures), their narratives tell us that searching for 'here' and 'there' and, ultimately, 'home' is not an easy feat. Jean-Michel, Léonie, Brian, Karen and Rania, who are confronted with mixed and mediated messages of here in relation to there and vice versa, remind us that borders are blurred and spaces shift, even in the same geographical location. The somewhere in between, then, becomes more crucial when discussing a world of Francophone imaginings and reimaginings. Making sense of a world of in betweens helps us to accept that, when we say we are "*Franco-whatever*" (or not), we are allowing for (dis)comfort, (dis)continuity, and uncertainty – as well as possibilities of difference. Living in a diasporic Francophone community in Alberta means thinking about the disruptive effects of migration, but also the new, creative possibilities of being in a truly Francophone *world*. That is, bringing 'there' home to Alberta 'here' can help an increasingly diverse group of Francophones – adults and youth – reconceptualize Francophone communities, Francophone homelands, and the Francophone world. As McLeod (2000) writes, the notion of home is "a valuable means of orientation" because it gives us a sense of our place in the world, not only telling us from where we originated but also where we belong. McLeod (2001) also points to the concept of being "at home", of "occupy[ing] a location where we are welcome, where we can be with people very much like ourselves" (p. 210). But what happens to the idea of 'home' and being 'at home' in the Franco-Albertan community when Francophones from various places, throughout Canada and the world, come here? How might these newcomers impact upon the ways 'Franco-Albertan community' and 'nation' are considered? How does reimagining 'home' and 'community' – in a diasporic Francophone Alberta – help to orient ourselves towards a reimagination of grand narratives of 'national' identity?

Imagining the nation(s): Understanding Francophone 'national' identity

Traditionally, conventional notions of 'community' and 'belonging' to the francophonie have long depended upon having two French Canadian parents, firmly rooted in a white, French Canadian Catholic community located in particular

Francophone places such as Sudbury, Ottawa, Moncton, and Winnipeg. For me, and for many Canadians, Alberta was/is not considered such a place. But experiences of migration, past and present, have changed my perceptions of this place, and my students' responses help explain how their relation to Alberta may be complicated by discourses of nationalism and dominant narratives of history and national identity and how, in turn, these normative discourses may be problematized by imagining (and crossing) multiple narratives of Francophone identity.

To better understand discourses of Francophone 'national' identity, it is important to briefly review the identity-nation link because the curricula of Francophone schools in a minority setting imagine Francophone communities as 'nations' (Anderson, 1991). Although the concept of identity is at the core of the new Alberta social studies curriculum (Alberta Education, 2005) and Francophone educational frameworks and curricula (Alberta Learning, 2001), it has also been a central question in citizenship education. Because identity has historically been associated with the nation, national identity has become a problematic concept in the globalized and pluralistic world environment. In the 19th century, the nation became the focus of people's loyalty and the modernist idea of national character created a unique sense of identity critical to the survival of the state (Richardson, 2002). The production of "good citizens", therefore, became the domain of the civic nation. On the one hand, "the nation as political construct and consensual contract between the governed and the governors... remained a fairly abstract concept", while on the other, it romanticized nationalism for its people (Richardson, 2002, p. 53). While both of these constructs created the modernist idea of identity, it was the state itself that developed the national character of its citizens.

Therefore, "national curricula were created to perpetuate, and in many cases manufacture national myths for the twin purposes of grounding national consciousness in some kind of legitimizing historical tradition and garnering the allegiance of people to the existing political status quo" (p. 54).

I turned to Sugars (2002) to help me locate the discussion of national myths from a postcolonial perspective and stress the importance of problematizing a seemingly singular Francophone identity. In wondering how Canada can be described as postcolonial, she looks to poststructuralism because of its critique of metanarratives and because of its insistence on the importance of language in constructing identity. For Sugars, poststructuralism cannot be ignored when troubling narratives of national identity. "Indeed," she insists, "these critiques have made it impossible to speak of an unproblematized national identity any longer" (p. 21). As she explains more fully,

> Any discussion of Canadian culture and society today must come to terms with this fact. Clearly, one can no longer speak of Canada the way one was used to in the past. Certainly any invocation of "the many as one," as Homi Bhabha memorably put it, is no longer tenable ("DissemiNation" 142). The entire course of Canadian history and culture has largely been a deliberation of this impossibility, despite frequent attempts to cover it over. Certainly one can no longer take for granted generally agreed-upon assumptions about national homogeneity when one sets out to invoke Canadian identity, or Canadian history, or Canadian anything, although I'm sceptical that one ever could assume such totalities. The history of Canadian cultural theory is, after all, plagued by such definitions and counter-definitions and qualifications (pp. 21-22).

My students' own narratives – implicated in multiple and competing sites of 'Canadian' identity, history and memory – help us imagine many and varied forms of 'national' identity because their communal imaginings illustrate how dominant cultural narratives of identity and belonging have resonated with the life experiences of 12 and 13 year-old Francophones in Alberta. Reading 'Francophone anything' is complex because, as Bhabha (1994/2006) suggests, our construction of identity should not be limited to static notions of culture but, rather, it should be hybridized if not messy. Bhabha emphasizes the contingent, open and unending nature of identities and representations, and also recognizes that, while the identity communities or 'national' groups that we create are imaginary, this does not mean that they are unreal; rather, identity can be reimagined because of its very fluidity and unreality (Huddart, 2006, p. 71). In fact, Bhabha (1994/2006) along with Anderson (1991) and Rushdie (1991) remind me that reading national identity requires an awareness of the difficulties and complexities surrounding (often static) nationalist representations of history, community and memory.

In the Canadian context and the context of my research, this translates into what Sugars (2002) calls "coming to terms with this fact" – a fact supporting a postcolonial exploration of nationalist representations of Francophone identity in a pluralist Franco-Canadian (school) community. This means that it is important to revisit the dominant narratives of the 'French Canadian' nation because this, too, is a construction and because students and teachers need to learn how they *think* of their communal imaginings as 'Francophones'. Hall (1994, p. 394) situates the discussion of cultural identity within the halls of multiple histories:

> Far from being grounded in mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.

Within the international and Canadian francophonies, there are multiple narratives of the past. For example, narratives of 'colonization' take different forms because we name them differently (e.g. Catholicism, Westernization, Anglo-Americanization) and because these names can (dis)place us differently within such grand narratives. The Canadian and Albertan francophonies encompass a diaspora of Francophone peoples and, in turn, "have been given the blessings and the terrors of multiplicity" (Hoffman, 1989, p. 164). We are called to reimagine Francophone identity in an era of accelerating pluralism especially because the narratives of the past are prompting us to account for our inherited multiplicity in the present.

Narrating the nation(s): Imagining multiple Francophone identities

For Said (1993), "nations are narratives" (p. xiii). Implicit in this observation is the understanding that nations are constructed by various narratives and that national identity is manufactured by the state. But in an era when growing cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic pluralism problematizes Francophone identity in the singular, significant questions arise about whether curricular representations of a fixed, Francophone identity are relevant to students (and teachers) and about whether the mandated curriculum valorizes the stories and experiences of a diverse group of Francophone students (Richardson, 2002, p. 29, p. 87). Bhabha (1991), as for Said (1993), believe that nations have their own narratives, especially dominant ones that situate one nation above the rest, that privilege a certain sense of the past and the present at the expense of all other pasts, traditions and 'national' representations. In the Canadian context, Francis (1997) has argued that the idea of Canada has relied upon certain national myths or "national dreams" and, because these myths "express important truths" about who Canadians are (p. 11), it is imperative that Canadians appreciate how such myths have created the story of Canada. Like Francis, Stanley (2006) also believes that the story of Canada is a partial one, privileging certain grand narratives of Canadian history that overpower the stories of marginalized groups. In a postcolonial reading of the Francophone community, then, this means (re)examining some of taken-for-granted understandings of Francophone 'national' identity, history and memory (Richardson, 2004; Stanley, 2006; Sugars, 2002) in order to narrate the 'nations' that are the Canadian and Albertan francophonies.

a) Narrating the historical French Canadian Catholic nation

Historically, the Catholic Church has had a central place in preserving and protecting Canada's Francophone (read French Canadian) communities. However, with only two of my six participants mentioning the Catholic church as integral to their Francophone identity, religion can no longer be so easily taken for granted when referring to Francophones. For Brian, church is synonymous with French and the Francophone community. When I ask Brian where he feels most at home, he replies that home is where French is – including church.

> *C'est plus fun d'aller à une église de ta langue* [...] *tu rencontres plein de gens francophones.*
>
> *Je me sens bien quand je suis à ma maison ou à l'école ou sinon les autres places comme à l'église ou au Québec, à Montréal. Plus comme les places où je suis entouré de gens qui parlent ma langue, le français.* [...] *L'église, c'est pas mal la même chose. À cause que je suis avec Dieu, à cause que je crois en lui, puis je crois qu'il parle ma langue, qu'il la comprenne.*

Brian perceives French as the dominant language of the Francophone community and takes comfort in knowing that God understands French, Brian's language. The French Catholic church becomes a safe haven for Francophones who seek to build community and to preserve and protect their native tongue, as well as their faith. And like Brian, this is the story I have been taught as well. However, as students (and myself, a product of the same school system in Ontario) in a Francophone Catholic school, it is not surprising that Brian *feels* a sense of belonging to this nation, one that is centred around related notions of family, faith and 'fun'...*en français*.

It is interesting to note, however, that Léonie is the only participant that explicitly identifies herself as Franco-Albertan and Catholic. Attending a Francophone Catholic school, then, is an added bonus for her.

> *Toutes les écoles n'ont pas besoin d'être catholiques, mais c'est comme un petit bonus pour moi...parce que, like, je suis francophone et catholique. Alors, je suis comme pas mal chanceuse. Moi, je dirais* [que je suis] *une fille de 12 ans qui est Franco-Albertaine et catholique.*

Although Léonie is proud to be Franco-Albertan and Catholic, she recognizes, in the second interview, that one does not necessarily have to be Catholic to be Francophone.

> *Moi, je suis catholique depuis je suis née, right. C'est comme dans ma famille et puis je ne peux pas juste arrêter. Mais comme aussi, je ne sais pas parce qu'il y a des francophones qui ont une différente opinion que moi puis ils ne sont pas catholiques. Ils peuvent être comme whatever. Mon amie, elle vient du Liban, elle est francophone, elle va à une école catholique mais elle est orthodoxe. So, pour moi, c'est pas vraiment ça parce qu'elle a une différente religion, mais on est encore des meilleures amies. Puis on partage la francophonie. Alors, vraiment je pense que non, d'être francophone, c'est pas être catholique.*

For Léonie, the francophonie is to be shared, but not necessarily along religious lines. This can be troubling for the traditional Franco-Albertan community as it seeks to protect its Catholic heritage. Case in point, *Le Franco* recently featured two pieces that recognized Edmonton's Archbishop Thomas Collins' commitment to "l'Église francophone de chez nous" (January 19, 2007). In particular, the full-page article, dedicated to Archbishop Collins (who speaks fluent French) as an ally of the Franco-

Albertan community,[46] also illustrated the concern of Catholic Francophones vis-à-vis his replacement: “On souhaite ardemment que le prochain aussi soit sensibilisé aux catholiques francophones” (p. 7).

Such a change can be disorienting for a community steeped in the Catholic tradition and in the narrative of survival. While Francophone communities outside Québec have been heavily dependent on the Catholic Church for its survival in the past, the waters of the future are muddied. The old idiom, *perdre sa langue, perdre sa foi*, has been dis-placed because it harks to a narrative of the past that collides with the present. And ‘recovering’ the past is being increasingly challenged by an urban, migrant and immigrant, plural Francophone population. The statistics below may better demonstrate what is taking place in Alberta:

- Based on 2001 Census data, 40% of French-speaking migrants to Alberta are originally from Québec, a province that has long rejected the ideology of the Catholic Church.
- Based on 2001 Census data, the median age of the Francophone population in Alberta was 43.7 years old, while the median age of Alberta’s Anglophone population was considerably lower at 32.4 years old. It is interesting to note that the median age of the Francophone population for Canada is also lower at 39.3 years old. Therefore, the age of the Franco-Albertan population may partly explain why the insistence on “l’Église francophone de chez nous.”

---

[46] When Archbishop Collins was named Archbishop of Toronto, the Franco-Albertan community reflected on losing their ally: “Il a vraiment donné une place aux francophones. Il faisait souvent référence à l’Église francophone au sein de l’archidiocèse. Je n’avais jamais entendu ça auparavant.” (as related by Yvon Mahé, representative to the Archdiocese of Edmonton to the Conseil de l’éducation de la foi catholique chez les Francophones de l’Alberta (CEFFA) (*Le Franco*, le vendredi 19 janvier 2007, p. 7).

- Based on 2007 Alberta Education statistics, there are five Francophone school jurisdictions and 28 Francophone schools in Alberta.[47] Of these 28 schools, 17 are Catholic (60%) and 11 are public (40%). Ten years ago, in 1997, there were three Francophone school authorities and 13 Francophone schools in Alberta. Of these 13 schools, 12 were Catholic (92%) and one was public.

These demographic and education statistics tell us that the traditional Franco-Albertan (read Catholic) identity is not on solid ground. In turn, positioning this past as *the* grand narrative for the Francophone collectivity in Alberta is being put into question. While I believe that the work (read blessings), for instance, of Père Lacombe and Archbishop Collins should continue to be recognized, I also believe that the plurality of the Francophone community is calling us to consider alternative ways of "secur[ing] our sense of ourselves into eternity." And for the Francophone school community and my blended board,[48] this means rethinking Catholic education.[49]

b) Narrating the bilingual and bicultural nation

Francis (1997) and Stanley (2006) both argue that national myths or grand narratives of Canadian history have portrayed a partial story of Canada and this includes the myth of Canadian unity or the narrative of two founding European peoples. The myth I learned as an elementary student in a Francophone school in Ontario (and later as a teenager in an Anglophone high school in the same province) was that Canada was created by "two solitudes" and that my country risked of being torn apart if I (and other students) did not understand and recognize the problems of our national disunity. In changing from a French Catholic elementary school to an English public secondary school, I learned two contradictory approaches to Canadian history: first, the stories of *mes ancêtres canadiens-français* to survive cultural and linguistic (and religious) assimilation; and, second, the stories of English Canadians to save Canada. In both cases, I learned narratives of survival. In both cases, the narratives contributed to the static notion that '(le) Canada' as bilingual and bicultural, at the expense of other stories and experiences of other Canadians (Stanley, 2006). If Canada is a postcolonial nation, then it becomes difficult to reconcile the 'two founding nations' theory with more stories and experiences of '(le) Canada' and Canadian history, memory and identity. In an era of accelerating pluralism, the narrative of the bicultural and bilingual nation becomes problematic. As the responses of Brian, Léonie and Sophie illustrate, the narratives of Canadian unity and survival are still alive, but increasingly not well within a Canada with multiple narratives of 'the nation'.

---

[47] As of 2007, there are 28 actual Francophone schools, as well as one Virtual School and one Outreach school, which are both non-denominational.

[48] My mixed school district, the only one of its kind in Canada, has both denominational (Catholic) and non-denominational (public) schools.

[49] Currently, there is a raging debate within the *Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens* (AEFO) regarding the Catholic question, or non-denominational question, depending on which side of the Franco-Ontarian fence the teachers sit. In their 2006 policy paper entitled *Nos écoles, notre avenir!*, AEFO outlined five major "challenges" including the need to rethink the governance model of Francophone schools. While the terms Catholic or public were not often used, the "rivalité" between school boards was noted as "une source de division entre les francophones et donc d'affaiblissement de la communauté" (p. 11). Moreover, AEFO members "ont souvent exprimé le souhait qu'il n'y ait qu'un seul système scolaire de langue française" en Ontario (p. 11). Of note, all of the members would like to see "une plus grande collaboration" between the public and Catholic school boards and "voir cesser la compétition" between these two major Franco-Ontarian institutions (p. 12).

Brian's preoccupation lies squarely with linguistic and cultural assimilation and English domination. Brian is concerned that Francophones are not as equal as Anglophones. Moreover, he sees that Francophones are 'invaded again' by Anglophones and, in turn, English. He is puzzled that Francophones lack respect in a country with two official languages.

> *Nous, on* [les francophones] *était ici plus avant vous* [les anglophones]. *Puis on devrait avoir plus de respect parce qu'on est un pays avec deux langues. Alors, je trouve que c'est pas juste, que nous, qu'on se fait dire des choses comme « retournez au Québec ou dans ta province ». On dirait que les Anglais essaient de tout envahir encore l'Alberta. Qu'ils nous laissent de la place. On a le droit d'être ici.*

Interestingly, Brian uses the words *Français* and *Anglais*, rather than Francophone and Anglophone, which brings forth the two founding nations theory and a discourse that labels all other Canadians as Other. Therefore, for Brian, 'here' is French-English bilingual, where Francophones are equal to Anglophones and there are more Francophones to ensure the two European 'nations' are in balance.

In the predominantly English province of Alberta, the Francophone school plays a particular role in preserving, protecting and promoting the grand narrative of a bilingual and bicultural Canada, one in which official language minority communities (should) flourish. But the story of a fragile Francophone community in Alberta is told within the context of the 'national' dream of Francophone survival and recognition by the Anglophone majority. Because the dream of French-Canadian Francophone survival does not dissolve, particularly in the context of Alberta (Franco-Albertans are increasingly anglicized, suffering from the highest rate of assimilation of any province), the role of the Francophone school is all the more vital in manufacturing the nation. And this 'Francophone nation' (outside Québec) seems to have a coherent narrative, and like other grand narratives, "imposes an organization on the past that starts with the present and works backwards" (Stanley, 2006, p. 34). In the context of the Franco-Albertan school, the narrative works back to more than a century, citing the *Constitution Act* of 1867 (which placed education under provincial jurisdiction and defined the rights to

Catholic education) and then fastforwarding to the 1982 *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (which, under Section 23, provides constitutional guarantees to Francophone education rights in Alberta, an official language minority setting) (Alberta Learning, 2001, p. 5). The choice of only two significant dates seems to gloss over the politically charged and sensitive notion of French-language education rights, as though the grand narrative of the Francophone school system in which I teach was "inevitable and natural" for Alberta's French Canadians (Stanley, 2006).

Of note, between 1867 and 1982, is the brief mention of the founding of the "first French-language school" in Alberta, namely at the Lac Sainte-Anne Mission in Lac La Biche, followed by a succession of struggles to regain the status of *North-West Territories Act, 1875/1877*, when Francophones were permitted to use French as a language of instruction, to present-day school governance. Behiels (2004) describes an arduous, even cautious battle in Alberta for Francophone education rights, between Franco-Albertans who did not want to disturb the status quo (in a province where many Albertans were vehemently opposed to official bilingualism and the Charter) and successive provincial Conservative governments that "made every effort to see to it that provincial autonomy prevailed over official language minority rights" (pp. 139-140). And this progression of struggles for recognition seems to have occurred in a linear and unquestioned manner. I would even argue that this perceived 'natural' progression toward a homogeneous Franco-Albertan identity remains unquestioned by Franco-Albertans. It would be unfair to downplay the struggles and disappointments that Franco-Albertan parents endured because the achievement of school governance in 1993 represented a decisive 'win' for recognition and more than a century of struggles *en*

Alberta français. At the same time, it would be unfair to continue to paint a homogeneous picture of cultural and linguistic survival of Francophones in Alberta, one that fixes all Francophones as struggling French-English bilinguals who are French Canadian Catholic in descent and driven by a deep-rooted instinct for recognition and for linguistic and cultural duality.

After reading Behiels (2004) descriptive account of the hostile overall climate within Alberta in the 1970s and 1980s towards French, Québec and Ottawa, coupled with Franco-Albertans' own unwillingness to disturb the equilibrium with Alberta's English-speaking majority concerning French-language education rights, it becomes important to illustrate how Franco-Albertans see themselves and their Francophone school in this historical context. "Their successful struggle transformed Alberta's French Canadians into Franco-Albertans enjoying a small but significant degree of segmental autonomy in the field of education" (Behiels, 2004, p. 141). And the creation of this modern Franco-Albertan identity, via Franco-Albertan school governance through a three-fold narrative of struggle, resistance and survival, has resonance for Grade 7 students who are the product of this system of French first language education. As their individual and collective responses illustrate, the Francophone school is rooted in a sense of pride and belonging to a French-speaking community.

For Léonie, as for all other participants, the Francophone school creates a sense of belonging. While students speak French, or should, Léonie specifically mentions that the Francophone school is not simply a question of language. It also teaches that there are different histories of Canada. However, these histories represent Canada's linguistic and cultural duality: English and French.

> *C'est comme appartenir à une communauté, juste être ensemble avec d'autres personnes comme toi. Comme ils parlent le français. Non* [l'école francophone, ce n'est pas juste une question de langue], *c'est comme on a tout un nouveau bac d'histoire puis de culture. Je sais que les Anglais, ils ont comme une différente histoire, puis les Français ont une autre histoire. Cette année-ci, en études sociales, on a appris comment les Anglais puis les Français avaient leurs grandes guerres là. Puis comme c'est ça qu'est-ce que ça me fait penser* [l'école francophone] *parce que, bien, les Français il fallait qu'ils se battent pour leurs lois puis leurs libertés.*

Not surprisingly, Léonie's account of the Francophone school experience is about belonging to a community of French speakers "just like me", although she adds that the Francophone school is not focussed on language alone. Rather, Léonie connects Francophone identity to learning about history and culture. Specifically, her example of learning two versions of Canadian history reflects the grand narrative of duality. The Francophone version also pays hommage to the French who fought for their rights and freedoms. Implied in her understanding of the Francophone school is the notion that belonging to the Francophone community resides in the Francophone school, a place where the present is redeemed in a past of struggle and resistance led by the French. Ultimately, it is a question of recognition, within the Francophone school and within the larger context of Alberta and Canada.

Interestingly, Sophie's response speaks to the role her teachers played in encouraging and maintaining a sense of pride to the Francophone community. Drawing on her experience in the Ontario Francophone school system, Sophie explains:

> *C'est comme être fier d'être francophone et de le montrer où est-ce que tu vas. Comme montrer que tu es francophone ou comme on le parle, um, ya, on le parle comme avec les gens autour de nous.*

Whether in Ontario or in Alberta, being Francophone is based on language maintenance and pride and Sophie, in recalling her teacher in a southwestern Ontario Francophone school telling this to the class, illustrates the reliance on a grand narrative that represents linguistic and cultural duality and survival. When I asked Sophie, a student who had recently arrived in Alberta, if she considered herself *Franco-Albertaine*, she answered yes without hesitation.

> *Laura:* *If someone were to ask you, do you say "je suis Franco-Albertaine"?*
>
> *Sophie:* *Ya, if someone asks me, but they don't really ask me. Ya, maybe 'cause, um, I don't know. Ya, 'cause I live here and I speak French. I don't know, I don't know. I'm African. If they ask, like, which part of Africa are you from, I would say I'm from Rwanda.*

Sophie imagines herself as belonging to the Franco-Albertan community because she lives here and speaks French. On the one hand, she establishes residence and language as attributes, problematizing birthplace as a marker of Franco-Albertan identity. On the other, her layered response problematizes ancestry because Sophie speaks French and is originally from Rwanda, *un pays de la Francophonie*. At the same time, her experience of *not* being asked who is she (or how she identifies herself) illustrates two things: first, that the category of being 'Franco-Albertan' is taken-for-granted within a narrative premised of being proud of the French Canadian nation (and, by extension, its school system); and, second but more importantly, that this grand narrative obscures who fits and who doesn't fit within the representation of 'Franco-Albertan' and its community. In other words, by not being asked who she is or where she is from, Sophie is not recognized and, in turn, she and her lived experiences are excluded from the story of Francophone struggles on English Alberta soil. Given the Alberta context, the question then becomes: is Sophie Franco-Albertan?

I think that students like Sophie, who are African in origin, are not asked about their life experiences because of their 'race'.[50] Generally speaking, being Black is not synonymous with the narrative of being Francophone in Canada. That is, within the French Canadian grand narrative, the focus has been/is on (White) European colonization, on the preservation of the (White) French Canadian Catholic nation, and on the survival of the French language and (White) Francophone culture, emphasizing community building and vitality. My interpretation is based on Stanley's (2006) definition of racist exclusion from grand narratives and public memory: "Instead of being part of the imagined community, they are excluded from it: they are excluded from its imagining and all too often excluded from its reality. The term for such exclusion is racism" (p. 38). In other words, Stanley (2006) – along with Canadian curriculum scholars such as Ng (1993), Norquay (2000), and Richardson (2002, 2004) – argue that grand narratives of nation-building and of belonging to 'the nation' can foster a shared sense of national identity or not. The increasing presence of French-speaking Africans in Western Canada and in Francophone schools disrupts normative representations of Francophone identity and history in educational practices. Drawing on the master's research of Moke Ngala (2006), the social integration of Black youth from Francophone Africa in urban Alberta Francophone schools is difficult, particularly for those who arrive as teenagers, because they are "parachuted" into programs of studies that do not represent them or their life experiences, and because history courses especially do not take into account the histories of various continents (pp. 53-54).

---

[50] I purposefully use quotation marks around the term 'race' because it is a construct. While I am cautious in raising this question of "racist exclusion" within Francophone schools and communities, I feel it is absolutely necessary to account for how "the Francophone" (also a social construct) is represented (or not) and to conceptualize this and the Francophone (school) community in more inclusive ways, regardless of the professional repercussions I may endure within 'my' community.

Returning to the student interviews, Sophie's response about being *Franco-Albertaine* complicates ways of thinking about the commonsense category of 'Francophone', while also renarrating complex and evolving relationships among curriculum discourses of language, history and race. Like Stanley (2006), Ng (1993) argues that 'race' should not be considered as a universal category, but rather in relation to taken-for-granted ways of knowing and being in Canadian society so that different groups of people can potentially find their place in the (re)telling of nation building. (Re)telling disruptive stories of 'the nation' can be particularly arduous (Dion, 2004), but if other Francophones are racialized and, in turn excluded, then it becomes imperative to confront curricula – both as-plan and as lived (Aoki, 1991b) – if all students in the Francophone school system are to belong, or at the very least, not be placed outside of a larger narrative of struggle, resistance and survival.

How the story of Francophone education rights is taught can be problematic in an increasingly plural Francophone community because the achievement of school governance not only redefined French Canadian Albertan identity within a bilingual and bicultural Canada, it also told (and continues to tell) young people how curriculum defines 'Francophone', some of whom may be excluded from the 'Franco-Albertan community'. Therefore, affirming Francophone education in the past can have implications in the present. For example, Stanley (2006) calls for the "need to dramatically re-imagine our approaches to the past, both approaches to public memory and to history teaching" (p. 40) because grand narratives work backwards, starting with the present, and because the contexts within which they were produced need to be explicated (p. 35). In the context of my research, even the Francophone school system – through its insistence on belonging and identity in the singular – endorses the framework of grand narratives, narratives that dominate the curriculum landscape of Alberta. My purpose in calling for an expanded understanding of Francophone identity is not to focus on the racist inclusion and exclusion of 'Francophones' in Alberta; rather, it is to make room for alternative representations of Francophone identities because these counter-narratives will inform and reflect who Francophones are, were, and will become. In making student narratives a vital aspect of how we understand and teach about Francophone identity, schools can be reimagined as places where the meaning of national identity is constantly negotiated in the interstitial spaces between formal curriculum and students' lived stories of the nation (Richardson, 2004).

c) Narrating a pluralist Francophone 'nation'

Bhabha (1994/2006) argues that nations are forms of narrations, offering a sense of the nation that is fluid, changing and multiple, rather than uniform and fixed. Indeed, Bhabha is critical of national narratives because they tend to produce well-defined and stable identities, rather than challenge them. In an era of accelerating pluralism, though, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the homogeneity of any national identity. As Burton (2003) writes, thinking with and through the nation requires challenging the parameters of 'national' histories and, in the context of the Canadian francophonie, this would mean challenging the heart of French Canadian national mythology (which I discuss later in the curriculum chapter). In considering the multivocal narratives of Francophone identity, student voices can help narrate a pluralist Francophone nation that not only disrupts national myths but also open up dialogue between the past and the present. Such narratives of changing identity can only help forge past(s), present(s) and future(s) as they open up the parameters for reimagining a heterogeneous Francophone community.

Growing up as "*Francophone hors Québec*," I feel I have always been positioned outside Québec and outside 'English' Canada. Furthermore, having an Anglo-Saxon name like Thompson has meant that 'I' have already been named. From where I am, a product of an exogamous marriage and an English teacher in a Francophone school, 'I' am either (not) Francophone or (not) Anglophone. 'I' am other. The same can be said of a growing number of my students: 'they' are other. They are out of place, having different names, speaking other languages, born in other places. Yes, these 'Francophones' are increasingly English-speaking. Yes, they may not be Catholic or White. And, yes, they may not from 'here'. Francophone educational policies have been acknowledging the diverse origins of the world francophonie (Alberta Education, 2005; Alberta Learning, 2001), but they also need to recognize the instability of the category "Francophone". How do multiple, changing subject positions help us understand the importance of shifting dominant ways of representing people and their identities in an increasingly plural Francophone world?

Sophie, in describing her multilayered Francophone self, invites us to ponder what and who a pluralist Francophone 'nation' might encompass in Alberta. As previously mentioned, Sophie considers herself Franco-Albertan, that is, it makes up one of her Francophone subject positions. When I ask her if someone could become *Franco-Albertaine*, such as myself, her answer is affirmative.

> *You can be both in Alberta* [Franco-Ontarienne and Franco-Albertaine]. *'Cause if you are living here* [in Alberta], *but you lived there* [in Ontario] *before, I guess you can be both. I am both. I'm both Franco-Ontarienne and Franco-Albertaine.*

In a Francophone world of multiple origins, questions of ethnicity, geography and history become blurred. Given the movement of peoples throughout the Francophone world, including (le) Canada, this means allowing for more open definitions of identity, for more subject positions related to place, and for more fluid interpretations of the 'Francophone' nation. In this sense, Sophie can consider herself Franco-Ontarienne and Franco-Albertaine simultaneously. In fact, she ponders the possibility of being more than two things.

> *Ya. I guess. I'm not really sure. But I guess if you can be two things, then you can be three. I would be Franco-Albertaine, Franco-Ontarienne, and Franco-Africaine.*

Upon adding the third layer to her Francophone identity, Sophie imagines herself as being from Africa, Ontario *and* Alberta. That's the way it is for Sophie, rather than idealized version, because her migrant experiences have placed her in three very different "Francophone" communities. Imagining 'Sophie' in this way makes room for a pluralist account of Francophones, by allowing a pan-Francophoneness, but this does not mean that such a multilayered identity is coherent and harmonious. Referring to Canada's preoccupation with the narrative of Canadian unity within a multicultural country, Sugars (2002) explains that Canadian "identity" is "inherently self-contradictory, for while Canada is affirmed in terms of its endlessly divisible pluralism, it is recouped as a nation defined by an unspecified sense of cohesion and cultural identity" (p. 16). While Canada as a nation continues to be characterized as postmodern state, such idealized notions of Canada, Canadian identity and culture remain vague and, ultimately, "can efface the cultural and political dynamics of contemporary Canadian society" (p. 17). In other words, Canadian national identity needs to be problematized to account for political and contradictory nuances, expressly because they can better illustrate the ambivalence present in a heterogeneous society.

The same rings true for the Canadian francophonie. Borrowing from Sugars (2002), the Francophone nation is called to respond to this postmodern ideal of pluralism by arguing for a meaningful postcolonial approach which complicates simplistic notions (and divisions) of Francophone identity and nationhood today. In other words, the term 'Francophone' conceals differences and can have assimilating tendencies. I am reminded of a Grade 7 student of mine who, in March of 2003, during the *Semaine nationale de la francophonie* celebrations, mentioned how she didn't like the word 'Francophone', explaining that "c'est plate; ça veut rien dire." Her comment made an impression on me because she had a point, one that up until then I had not seriously considered: the term 'Francophone' can erase difference and not mean much of anything. Of course, not all "Francophones" are equal, and this is true of the construction Franco + hyphen + adjective. Alberta, Ontario and Africa are not equal; each has its own legacy of colonialism and the hyphen between each of these place-origins should not be compared, for fear of misrepresenting Francophone "identity", especially in postcolonial contexts. For Young (2003), this means conceptualizing the postcolonial nation "in terms of its fragments, those parts and those peoples who do not easily belong to it, who exist at the margins and peripheries of society. They are the means through which the nation relates to itself" (p. 63).

While the ideal of the Francophone nation continues to be imagined as French Canadian, White, Catholic and French-English bilingual, Francophone newcomers to Alberta, like Sophie, illustrate how ethnocultural diversity is creating diasporic narratives of Francophone nationhood and diverse forms of belonging. And narrating the multiple nations of and belongings to the francophonie means rethinking the realities of hybridity, allowing "Francophones" themselves to interpret their new spaces and places with relevant and creative meanings of their own (McLeod, 2002, p. 74). If Francophoneness and Whiteness and Catholicism and French-English bilingualism go together, then, borrowing from Bhabha, "there has been no collective working through of this imperial experience" (Huddart, 2006, p. 199). Accordingly, Bhabha invites us to transform education and, in my case, perhaps transform the Francophone school with its insistence on a fixed, coherent, uniform narration of Francophone identity. And however disruptive and destabilizing to some Francophone educators, Sophie's response reflects the plural, diasporic and hybrid nation that is the Albertan francophonie. Young Francophones like Sophie are inventing the Francophone nation, and their voices should be recognized and encouraged, because they are helping us reimagine Francophone identity.

In fact, when I ask Sophie if it matters who calls themselves *Franco-albertains*, she says that it does: "Um, I guess 'cause that's who you are, so I guess it matters." Indeed, being Franco-Albertan is important and not a bad thing. What I find particularly intriguing is how the Franco-Albertan community is imagined, who gets to narrate it, and what stories are (not) included in such narrations. Sophie is right: self-identifications are important because "that's who you are" and, as she embraces a Franco-Albertan subject position, she too is informing and interrupting narratives of Francophone identity in plural, postcolonial times.

Re-narrating for the future: Re-imagining Francophone identity

In describing the changing Franco-Ontarian school context, Gérin-Lajoie (1995) wrote: "L'identité collective doivent donc se redéfinir à partir de cette nouvelle réalité pluraliste" (p. 43). Twelve years later, the Francophone collectivity in Canada, especially outside Québec, needs to redescribe itself, which translates into redefining itself vis-à-vis the increasing plurality of its communities. And as the responses of my student participants have illustrated, there are alternative ways of naming one's Francophone identity and making sense of the world. Perhaps this is why Jean-Michel positioned Franco-Albertan identity in this way:

> *Pas tous les Franco-Albertains sont sûrs de leur identité. Ils savent qu'ils parlent français puis qu'ils sont en Alberta. Puis ils savent d'où leurs parents viennent.*

What Franco-Albertans know for sure is that increased migration and immigration to Alberta is influencing the borders and spaces of the francophonie. Léonie is witnessing the expansion of the Francophone community and she attributes this to having Franco-African friends.

> *Moi, j'ai des amies puis elles sont Franco-Africaines. Une me dit qu'est-ce qu'elle fait à Noël puis c'est différent. Puis je vois ce que moi, je fais pour mes traditions puis elles sont vraiment différentes. Mais ça ne me fait rien vraiment parce qu'elle est francophone juste comme moi. Puis je ne peux pas la juger juste à cause de sa culture.*

Léonie, in talking with her friends about how they celebrate Christmas, learns to appreciate that Catholics (and Christians) have different traditions. She is accepting of this difference because she realizes her friends are Francophone "just like me": they share the francophonie. The doubleness of same but different incites Léonie not to judge. Hall (1994) suggests that, while cultural identity can involve a "shared culture" and, thus, a common "frame of reference," it can also disrupt the notion that friends are *différentes* and *juste comme moi*. Borrowing from Hall (1994), "the positions of enunciation" articulated by Francophone youth not only put the 'Francophone' subject position at the centre but, more importantly, problematize these spoken positions because they "are never identical, never exactly in the same place" (p. 392). Put another way, the issue of diaspora is at heart of these subject positions because cultural difference and religious diversity highlights the fluid and hybrid identities of the diasporic francophonie within Alberta. Being Francophone represents not only a reality of shifting social, cultural, religious and geographic locations within Alberta and Canada, but it also maps a hybrid Franco-Albertan identity that is an ongoing process and a product of intersections. As students interact with each other, they will become influenced by other Francophones, from other parts of Canada and the world, from other races and religions, from other languages and cultures.

Atwood (1972) asks "What, why, and where is here?" as the quintessential identity question of Canadian literature and of Canada.[51] Interrogating Francophone identity, especially in the singular, means relocating place in identity. A remapping would entail allowing ourselves to dwell in multiple perspectives and places of identity.

---

[51] Interestingly, this phrase is partially borrowed from Gertrude Stein, which can speak to how questions of national identity 'crisis' (because we do not know who 'we' are) go beyond the borders of Canada. While my travels and my readings tell me that such questions are not uniquely Canadian, Atwood stresses the importance of understanding a uniquely different 'Canlit' (and its place in Canada) to explain the interplay between the who and the where of Canada.

Léonie, who is proud of the historical Franco-Albertan community, has accepted the notion of different Francophone perspectives.

> *C'est comme on dirait que la francophonie est un cube 3D. Puis tu le mets au centre de la table, right, puis il y a des personnes tout alentour puis tout le monde a leur angle de la voir* [la francophonie] *puis c'est comme ça qu'il la voit.*

The angle by which people see the francophonie, however, is multidimensional. Behar (1996) and Chambers (2004) invite us to respect the past(s) and make sense of it(them), along with how we live in the present and how we want to in the future. And life experiences and memories can provide the "complicated map" between particular places, events and experiences that challenges us to explain *Alberta français* as a place and an idea, in ways that disrupt static notions of identity. Therefore, how we make sense of the Francophone world needs to be reimagined, by attending more closely to diverse life experiences and memories. The passages of my student participants help us turn towards notions of pluralism and hybridity as a way to recognize Canada's and Alberta's increasing Francophone diversity and diasporic communities. Rethinking how to recognize the plurality of Francophones, however, challenges all of us to approach Canadian and Francophone identity narratives in different, complex and overlapping ways.

The life experiences of the Grade 7 students involved in this study open a variety of windows onto a community, but also on what it means to be living in a particular place at a particular time in history. Moreover, they make us witnesses to a challenge we all face: having to (re)consider the past and the present to continually (re)imagine one's community. Their passages, stories, lived experiences as Francophones in Alberta are not simply representations, but complex narrations of history, geography, community, identity – and possibility. *Bref*, there is no single way of being authentically Francophone. And there is no single way of becoming Franco-Albertan. Being and becoming who and where one is (from) is changing and contingent and, in turn, constantly negotiated. In the postcolonial context, then, multiple Francophone identities are lodged in complex narrations of possibility. While histories, memories, belongings and expectations may (continue to) collide, it is important for narratives to cross one another in order to reimagine Francophone identity in an increasingly plural society. And this means exploring how the discourses of language and curriculum create and contest notions of Francophone self, school and world as sites of belonging or unbelonging, both real and imaginary. The next two chapters, on language and curriculum respectively, will delve into the muddy waters of how the students involved in this study 'choose' to affirm their Francophone identity, or not, within shifting borders, subject positions and spaces of the francophonie and the Francophone school community.

CHAPTER 9

A QUESTION OF LANGUAGE

Tu ne peux pas t'appeler, dire que tu es francophone, si tu ne peux même pas parler français. Tu dois conserver ta langue.
– Karen (Franco-Rwandaise)

À l'école moi puis mes amis on parle, like, l'anglais beaucoup, right? Puis tous les professeurs sont toujours comme « Parle plus français » na na na. Puis comme okay, you know, so ya, il y a beaucoup de personnes alentour de moi qui m'encouragent d'être plus francophone, de vivre comme, like, d'être fière d'être francophone puis de parler français parce que, bien, c'est comme vraiment ma langue maternelle, I guess.
– Léonie (Franco-Albertaine)

C'est rare que je parle anglais. Puis ma mère aime pas ça [qu'on parle en anglais]. *Je pense qu'elle ne veut pas qu'on perd notre français, tu sais. Alors... puis elle est bonne en anglais. C'est juste comme, ya, elle est pas forte, elle aime juste qu'on parle français.*
– Brian (Québécois)

How does language challenge and inform our senses of self and of the world?

Writing about language hits a nerve with me – in large part because I live between two official languages. It is not sufficient to say, as Italian filmmaker/director Federico Fellini does, that "A different language is a different vision of life." For me, this is stating the obvious, but what is less obvious is explicating why language can have such a hold over individuals, young and old alike, schools and communities. Poststructuralism invites me to rethink why talking about language is *énervant* for me.

1. As an elementary student at a French Catholic school in the 1970s and early 80s, my friends and I would speak English at recess, and French in the classroom, at church and to each other's parents. Our teachers would stress the importance of speaking French and being proud of our French Canadian heritage. They would hold contests to correct or supplement our French. I will never forget the promotional posters for expressions such as pansement adhésif (et non 'un band-aid'), and the one Friday my youngest sister, the shyest child around, won an actual dollar bill for not speaking **English** that week. This would forever remain a family joke because we all knew my sister never spoke at all!

2. I would learn, during a national summer research program in 1994, that the dilution of the French language was not only a result of swimming in a sea of language, but also a result of a new trend: exogamous families. Is that what my family was called? Up until that point, I remembered how French Canadians had mentioned so-and-so marrying ***l'ennemi***.

3. As a student teacher in Southwestern Ontario the following year, and a teacher in Alberta ten years later, the blame game continued – squarely on the shoulders of exogamous families. An interesting counterpoint was after a French radio interview I did in Plamondon-Lac La Biche during the local *Festival de la Moisson*. Inevitably the topic of conversation revolved around my French fluency. I had maintained my French. I had survived. And at the evening celebrations local teachers congratulated me and mentioned how uplifting my interview had been for them. There is hope after all. ***Espoir***.

What happens when a nerve is stimulated by ascribed notions of 'national' identity and belonging? What happens when young people feel emotions of loss and frustration when multiple linguistic nerves are not nourished? What is thought of the complexities and consequences when schools and teachers 'aid' these nerves? While recalling the past is interpretive and selective, it is with recollection that the past is actively appropriated to the self in the present, thus contextualizing understanding (Kerby, 1991). Perhaps it is time to reconsider how language challenges and informs our senses of self and the world, especially given the increasingly plural francophonie we are (becoming) familiar with. And perhaps the complex responses of my participants, students in one Francophone high school in urban Alberta, can help us consider the conflicted messages of such a contentious subject: the preservation and promotion of the French language and of a Francophone identity in official-language minority communities such as Alberta.

Troubling language at the roots

> Le sens premier et immédiat du terme était né: la francophonie recouvrait à la fois une idée linguistique et une relation géographique (ensemble des territoires où l'on parle français).
>
> – Xavier Deniau (2001, p. 10)

The term francophonie was initially coined by a French geographer, Onésime Reclus (1837-1916), simply meaning the French-speaking world. In Tétu's (1999) words, "le sens premier de la francophonie était né: **le regroupement sur une base linguistique** en tenant compte des relations géographiques" (p. 43, author's emphasis). While the term francophonie would be forgotten for over 80 years, the term was revived in the early 1960s to encompass an international Francophone movement of regions and countries which embrace La Francophonie[52] and its organizations. In fact, it was the president of Sénégal, Léopold Sédar Senghor, who played an active role in endorsing widespread use of the term francophonie. It is interesting to note that La Francophonie as we know it today came into existence in 1962 – the same year that France lost Algeria as a colony. France's imperial past does not remain in the past in the historical sense. As Kasuya (2001) explains,

> The end of French colonialism coincides with the beginning of the *Francophonie*. In fact, we could suspect rightly that the *Francophonie* is unconsciously imbued with colonial motives – not, of course, in the military and political sense, but in the cultural and linguistic sense – and that France tries to compensate for its lost international status with the "*défense et illustration*"of the *Francophonie* (p. 247).

Although the fact that France lost Algeria and created La Francophonie in 1962 may be a coincidence, it also reflects a movement towards international organization in the public sphere. For instance, the Commonwealth had set the stage for international cooperation amongst former British colonies. In part, the success of the Commonwealth surely influenced French-speaking leaders to create their own post-colonial, language-based organization. What is more interesting, however, is the continued discourse of La Francophonie. In the eyes of its advocates, the French-speaking international community merely shares and rejoices in the benefits of the French language. It is not surprising that "it is frequently claimed that Francophonie has nothing to do with imperialism and colonialism, but that it will open up a way to the defense of the diversity of languages in the world against Anglo-American monopoly hegemony" (Kasuya, 2001, p. 248). Indeed, if La Francophonie wants to ensure that French be considered as a "global language," it must also acknowledge the political and socio-cultural implications of language and language education.

---

[52] The term Francophonie, with a capital F, refers to the international organization of 55 countries (200 million people) on five continents, for whom French is an official or commonly used language (OIF, 2007). The term francophonie, with a small f, designates the totality of the Francophone community in a given region, province, territory or country. In Canada, for instance, we tend to use the terms Francophonie and francophonie interchangeably and, while these terms can sometimes be synonymous, they are more often complimentary (AFI, 2006, p. 8).

Willinsky (1998) reminds me that the schooling of language is an imperial project in that national-imperial languages such as English, French and Spanish carry with them legacies of empire, namely a history of conquest and dominance. Drawing on the increasing demand for English as a Second Language courses in Vancouver, British Columbia, Willinsky urges teachers and students to learn the linguistic history of English, that is, account for historical colonial patterns of mapping 'English' territories – including language curriculum – because imperial divisions of the world continue to claim a hold on language learners who inhabit postcolonial spaces of competing notions over nation and empire. In the postcolonial context of Canada, and in the case of my research, 'French Canada' and French in 'English Canada', it is vital not "to miss the educational opportunity of understanding how language is used to build, divide, and govern a community" (Willinsky, 1998, p. 202). Willinsky's discussion of how language and history are interconnected in a postcolonial world helps stimulate critical awareness of the complex relations between the role of Francophone education and its 'nationalist' (cultural and linguistic) mission of "affirming Francophone education" (Alberta Learning, 2001, p. 1).[53] The tension between Francophone and Anglophone (or French and English) and, increasingly, Francophone and other, is a theme running through much of my research and the responses of my participants. For language is so intertwined in the production of (a certain) Francophone culture, identity and curriculum that highlighting the complex relations between language and identity formation will better situate how language challenges and informs students' notions of self and the world.

---

[53] *Affirming Francophone Education – Foundations and Directions* describes the framework for French first language education in Alberta, that is, the educational needs of Francophone students, their families and communities (Alberta Learning, 2001). While the French document also 'affirms' Francophone education, "Francophone" is defined linguistically, *Affirmer l'éducation en français langue première*, placing the French language at the centre of Francophone identity, community and family.

Briefly, then, if the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF) seeks to preserve, promote and protect the French language throughout the world, it is not surprising that their discourse of language (education) filters down to member countries such as Canada. For example, the OIF (2007) lists under its principal "actions" the French language, which promotes social cohesion and the 'originality' of the international Francophone community:

> La cohésion et l'originalité de la communauté francophone reposent sur le partage d'une langue commune. Le français représente un outil de communication orale et écrite privilégié qu'il faut entretenir et développer pour l'affirmer aussi bien au sein de l'espace francophone qu'à l'échelle internationale (n.p.).

The OIF is preoccupied with the status of French not only within 'Francophone spaces' but also on an international level and, as Deniau (2001) and Tétu (1992) both argue, for the preservation and promotion of 'cultural relationships' between and among member countries (Tétu, 1992, p. 267), and not given the predominance of English and the Anglophone world (Deniau, 2001, pp. 104-105). In other words, it is vital (and natural) to affirm such linguistic and cultural associations for the development of the 'Francophone community'. However, *l'espace francophone* is an ambiguous space; only France, the centre, is entirely French-speaking (as well as Monaco), while other countries, on the margins, are either only partially Francophone due to its minority populations (such as in Belgium, Canada and Switzerland) or bilingual such as Tunisia or Morocco. Moreover, as I learned while living in France, the French of France is the norm and the French of its neighbour, Belgium, was the butt of numerous jokes.[54] As a Francophone outside Québec, I learned from a young age that Québec French was the language of our 'imperial' centre and 'our' French, whether it be from Ontario, Alberta or Acadie, was tainted by English and other accents and thus not 'real' French.

Living and working in various Canadian provinces and parts of France, I have come to understand French accents, usages and versions as multiple yet not equal, intersecting many yet varied centres and margins, competing for claims of French authority and even authenticity within both Francophone and Anglophone spheres. As Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (2002) explain, "Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated, and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth', 'order', and 'reality' become established" (p. 7). In my bilingual world, it is therefore possible for French to have multiple and competing 'centres' and 'peripheries' because French is a 'national' community language, a 'national' official language (both first and second languages), and a world language, which longs to be recognized – and affirmed – at all these levels. Accordingly, *l'espace francophone* is a social and linguistic construction, that is, a local, national and global francophonie of the imaginary.

While French is (still) the *langue commune* of the global Francophone imaginary, the status of French across Canada and around the world is, as Willinsky (1998) writes, "not simply an incidental aspect of empire" (p. 190). In other words, the idea of social cohesion and shared cultural goodwill were not always at the heart of the French-language sphere. In fact, pre-1945 France relied on its colonies to extend its linguistic and cultural empire:

---

[54] Around 1880, when the French geographer Onésime Reclus defined "la francophonie" to mean the

> Avant la seconde guerre mondiale, l'idée de francophonie conçue comme un dialogue et un partage n'existe pas. La France semble rayonner naturellement sur des pays qui ne sont que ses simples prolongements culturels. Après 1945, [...] la France prend conscience du rôle que peuvent jouer les pays francophones dans la « défense et illustration » de la langue française. Les zones de recours les plus importantes, mais également les plus riches d'espoir pour la francophonie, sont les anciennes colonies (Deniau, 2001, p. 47).

While Deniau argues that the French language is no longer "impératrice" but rather "médiatrice" given the dialogue and diversity between and among Francophone countries, some of the Francophonie's colonial roots are still maintained. For example, the Francophonie represents a French-speaking world of inequality; it is divided between France and the rest, but within the 'rest' are further inequalities. Non-western (African) member countries are in a situation of subordination to French-speaking Europe and North America and, furthermore, in a position of economic disparity (Young, 2003, p. 4). Or, as Léopold Sédar Senghor described the majority of Francophone member countries, they are "beaucoup du côté du recevoir et peu du côté de donner" (Tétu, 1992, p. 30). For Tétu, the French have had to move away from a nostalgic ideal of its colonial past in order to "oeuvrer à construire une francophonie ouverte, plus égalitaire et davantage tournée vers un avenir communautaire" (p. 28). If 'Francophone' nations, like their varied French language(s) and culture(s), have a hierarchy, then, it is important for the Francophonie to recognize that not all concerns of member countries are universal and to

---

French-speaking world, he did not include the Belgians (Chaudenson, 1999, p. 323).

expand its parameters for a more flexible approach to the global Francophone community.

Indeed, various Francophone 'centres' and 'margins'– whether they be Paris, Montréal, or Edmonton – are called to rethink the growing ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic pluralism and how the question of difference is examined and can be expanded. For the Francophonie is having to come to terms with its difference in an era of rapid change, as it continues to embrace a future-oriented narrative of affirmation. In the context of Francophone communities across Canada, this means "setting concrete targets" to shape the future of predominantly English provinces: Francophones immigrating outside Québec should be and continue to be Francophone, and sending their children to Francophone schools is one "indicator" of a Francophone immigrant's "continued attachment to the minority language" (Quell, 2002, p. 10). In other words, Canada is also relying on other French-speaking colonies to extend its linguistic and cultural 'empire' across Francophone minority communities. Interestingly, Chaudenson (1999) is keen on 'Francophone' Africa where French is an official language in most countries (p. 322), and concludes that Francophones in North America (where numbers of Francophones are dwindling) should be particularly interested in the "développement réel d'une francophonie africaine effective" (p. 324). Returning to Deniau's comment on former French colonies being the zones of recourse for a promising global francophonie, I wonder if French-speaking Africans, whether in Africa or Alberta, are the "the starting point for new critical geographies of [French] imperial culture" (Burton, p. 4, 2003). For the *diffusion de la langue française* seems to rest squarely on their shoulders, within *les francophonies mondiale, canadienne et albertaine.*

What is more, 'nationalist' and linguistic territories are overlapping within Canada's Francophone communities and classrooms. And with the "careful selection" of new French-speaking immigrants to Canada to settle Francophone minority communities (Quell, 2002, p. 10), colonial histories will intertwine in more and complex ways. In the context of Francophone education, or French first language education, it is imperative to understand how the French language is used to "build" Francophone communities outside Québec (Willinsky, 1998, p. 202). Given the growing ethnocultural diversity, Canada's Francophone communities (like La Francophonie) are home to dozens of languages, from Arabic to Lingala, from Spanish to Kinyarwanda, now all competing for viability with French. In the contexts of (English) Canada and (French) Québec, the language-identity link is extremely complex, always value-laden, and often highly charged (e.g. Behiels, 2004; Bergeron, 1999; Dallaire, 2003, 2004, 2006; Dallaire & Denis, 2000; Dalley, 2006; Edwards, 1985; Heller, 1999; Landry, Deveau & Allard, 2006; Levasseur-Ouimet, 1991). In Alberta, too, the Franco-Albertan (school) community is preoccupied with negotiating a balance between hegemonic English and their threatened French language. While Alberta is not an officially bilingual province, French is protected at the national level: the language rights of Francophones are enshrined in the *Official Languages Act* of 1969. Moreover, the French-language education rights of Francophones in Alberta are protected in the 1982 *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, under Section 23.[55] Still, Franco-Albertans suffer some of the highest assimilation rates in Canada (Allaire, 2001), increasing rates of exogamous families (Dalley, 2006) and, currently, a sizeable influx of French-speaking

---

[55] While the literature on Francophone communities reveals a preoccupation around the state's role in the (re)production of the "Francophone" in Canada, for example, in the discourses of sociology, political

(im)migrants (Canada, 2003). And in this era of accelerating pluralism, La Francophonie, the Canadian francophonie and the Albertan francophonie all continue to maintain that the primary strength of the French language is that it brings us together and holds us together. Or does it? The ghost of Onésime Reclus taunts me and, in turn, calls me to trouble the discursive routes of language and Francophone education in the context of my research.

Troubling the historical route of Francophone education

Francophone education in Alberta – and the responsibilities of Francophone schools – have been primarily defined by one document, the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* passed in 1982, and by one decision (Mahé v. Alberta), the right for Francophone school governance as upheld by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1990. Franco-Albertan parents, leaders and community organizations had long lobbied for rights to French (first) language education and school governance. And their individual and collective dedication and energy cannot be overstated: their commitment to Francophone education as the key to the renewal and growth of the Franco-Albertan community and, ultimately, survival was immeasurable.[56] Interestingly, four out of six student participants mention either past or present struggles of maintaining a French/Francophone presence on Anglo-Alberta soil.

---

science and education (e.g. Couture & Bergeron, 2002; Dallaire & Denis, 2000; Dalley, 2006; Theriault, 1994), this is not the primary purpose of this chapter. This is another dissertation.

[56] For an in-depth account of the struggles and successes of Canada's Francophone minority communities to win governance over their schools and school districts, please see Behiels (2004).

I began the second round of one-on-one interviews asking the student participants to describe their understanding of the Francophone school in Alberta.[57] What struck me was how Léonie immediately situated the discussion around her Grade 7 social studies classes on Canadian history between the French and the English. While for all other participants their perception of the Francophone school is based primarily on language, for Léonie this is not the case: she is categorical when she answers that it is not une école de langue. Rather, it is historical and cultural: "c'est comme on a tout un nouveau bac d'histoire puis de culture." When I ask Léonie to clarify what she means by histoire, she refers to *les pionniers* and then continues with her social studies class on French Canadians and English Canadians. Léonie was the only participant to locate the question of Francophone education within a national historical context. For her, there is a connection between the larger struggles of French settlers in New France and between the current struggles of Franco-Albertans in gaining access to Francophone education and language rights.

What I find interesting about Léonie's response is how she makes sense of her school drawing predominantly from competing discourses and conflicting dichotomies. On the one hand, Léonie rejects the linguistic discourse of Francophone education: that the Francophone school is the setting par excellence to produce French-speaking

---

[57] I began with a broad question on students' perceptions of the Francophone school because the mission of Francophone education revolves around issues of language, culture and identity (e.g. Alberta Learning, 2001; Dalley, 2006; Gérin-Lajoie, 2003, 2004, 2006; Landry, Deveau & Allard, 2006). In the contexts of Alberta and Ontario, the Ministries of Education have official government policies that speak to these issues, and both policies refer to students needing to "develop" and "affirm" their cultural (and linguistic) identity as well as a "sense of belonging" to the Francophone community (Alberta Learning, 2001; Ontario Education, 2005). Thus, it is important to re-immerse myself in discourses of Francophone education as I attempt to map and problematize the category of Francophone.

Francophones (e.g. Alberta Education, 2005; Alberta Learning, 2001; Dalley, 2006; Ontario, 2005). On the other hand, she embraces the historical discourse of Francophone education and communities: that the Francophone school should produce avant tout young Francophones who appreciate the struggles of the(ir) pioneers. I turned to the work of Dallaire & Denis (2000) on the Alberta Francophone Games and the discursive practices of Canada's Francophone communities. Their work made me suspicious of my own understanding of the transformation of Francophone communities and helped me appreciate the predominance of the 'French Canadian' historical discourse in these communities. Dallaire & Denis (2000) call this discourse "cultural" because it emphasizes the construct of culture as the "essence" of Francophoneness, revolving around French Canadian roots and French settler experiences in New France. As they explain,

> This version of the cultural discourse discriminates between French speakers by emphasizing the cultural principle and effectively creates a more exclusive group. Those of non-French Canadian culture are effectively absent from the construction of the cultural community (n.p.).

In other words, this historicized cultural discourse marginalizes non-French Canadians (read immigrants), although they may be French speakers, because Francophone immigrants have not travelled the historical route of being – and having come from – 'true' French minority stock in the French Canadian context. Recalling Léonie's response, Léonie – whose family has traced their French Canadian roots in both Alberta and New France – connected her own life experiences of being a student at a Francophone school to this historical route. While students are expected to conform to the expectations of being French-speaking 'French Canadian' Francophones, Léonie's response unsettles settler stories as being discriminatory in increasingly plural Francophone (school) communities with multiple cultures and histories. Therefore, her response not only involves pitting the English against the French (and vice versa), it also illustrates the tension between French Canadian and non-French Canadian. Thus, more than one dichotomy and discourse are at play here.

While Brian made similar connections to historical struggles, his sense of the Francophone school is more linguistic, providing the French language impetus for Francophone identity and survival, both individually and collectively. As an elementary student at a Francophone school in urban Alberta, Brian learned that Franco-Albertans were pioneers in their own right and fought hard to have their own schools. Brian is grateful that Alberta has Francophone schools because, according to him, he surely wouldn't have learned anything in English while also losing his French.

> *Je trouve ça l'fun* [d'être élève dans une école francophone] *à cause quand on est arrivés ici* [du Québec, on pensait que] *ça serait seulement des écoles anglophones et j'aurais rien appris—« C'est comme quoi ? » Puis sûrement qu'on perdrait notre français. J'aime ça qu'il y a des écoles françaises ou anglaises. C'est comme si quelqu'un, sa langue maternelle c'est le français, il y a une école pour lui en français. Et si c'est l'anglais, il y a des écoles anglaises. Je suis content qu'ici il y a une école francophone à cause, je sais pas, à un moment donné c'était plate. Puis parce que j'ai appris que les Français* [les Franco-Albertains] *se sont battus beaucoup pour avoir une école francophone puis qu'ils ont été contents, les Français* [les Franco-Albertains], *qu'ils étaient ici, spécialement les jeunes puis tout. Moi, je suis content que c'est pas en anglais parce que moi, j'aurais sûrement rien appris à l'école depuis jusqu'en* 7^e *année.*

When Brian and his family arrived in Alberta, they neither spoke nor understood English. Consequently, having access to a Francophone school became a linguistic lifeline for Brian. This makes Brian 'happy' that there is a Francophone school because the 'battle' for Francophone education was hard-fought – and won. It is worth mentioning how Brian uses the adjectives '*française*' and '*francophone*' interchangeably. The use of '*école française*' illustrates the emphasis on language, that is, *la langue française*.[58] Moreover, Brian continues, in both individual interviews, to use the word *Français* when speaking of Franco-Albertans. Overall, Brian wants to continue learning *en français*, although he is now fluently bilingual; the Francophone school, Brian believes, is the place to be when one's mother tongue is French, whether in Québec or Alberta.

Brian's use of the common Québécois expression '*c'était plate*' initially made me laugh, but it precedes Brian's sense of relief that he can maintain his language and continue to learn (the purpose of education). At first glance, '*c'était plate*' can mean 'it was boring', but what I hear is Brian's sense that the world of settlers was far from boring; rather, the French Canadians were '*tannés*' and, therefore, fought back. By his use of popular expressions, Brian tells a larger story of his French Canadian heritage, of his people who were fed up with English hegemony and devoted themselves to being heard.

> *Jean-Michel, too, is somewhat frustrated by anglonormativity, which he describes as 'people here' continually 'surprised' by the French fact of Alberta. For Jean-Michel, French is spoken in Alberta because many of Alberta's fur traders and pioneer settlers were French Canadian and, thus, Alberta has a French heritage.*
>
> *Les gens ici sont surpris de savoir qu'on parle le français puis on, les francophones, c'étaient les premiers en Alberta.* [...] [Les gens sont surpris] *parce que l'Alberta, c'est vu comme une province anglophone.*

---

[58] In Alberta, official policy documents refer to Francophone schools in two ways: French first language schools and Francophone schools (e.g. Alberta Learning, 2001). In Ontario, however, Francophone schools are known as *écoles de langue française*, or French-language schools (e.g. AEFO, 2006; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). In Manitoba (2006), Francophone education is governed by the *Division scolaire franco-manitobaine*: its schools are known as *écoles françaises*, and their K-12 curriculum falls under one of four official 'School Programs', that is, the *Programme français*. All of these appellations name the main thrust of Francophone education – the French language – and illustrating, for example, the pan-Canadian preoccupation of linguistic survival.

Jean-Michel refers to Alberta's Francophones as 'the first ones' in Alberta and, for this reason, people should not be surprised that French is spoken here. When I mention how Ontario, for instance, is also perceived as an Anglophone province, he makes a distinction between being *Franco-Albertain* and *Franco-Ontarien*. For Jean-Michel, this ongoing element of surprise on Alberta soil is a demarcation of difference. While Jean-Michel concedes that Alberta continues to be seen as an English place, despite the historical presence of Franco-Albertans and the French language, he would like 'people here' to acknowledge that Francophones helped to settle and create Alberta too.

For Karen, who arrived in Alberta via Ontario/the United States/Rwanda, French should be recognized because it exists in Alberta. Karen believes that it is important for Francophones to speak French because it interrupts the predominance of English and recognizes the rightful place French should occupy here.

> *Tous les francophones* [devraient parler plus français]. *Bien, pour ne pas, don't let English control. On est ici aussi. Le français est là.*

What I find particularly interesting is that Karen has adopted the historical discourse of the French Canadian people. After all, Karen is partly the product of the Alberta Francophone secondary school, but she also lived the experience of being a minority 'Franco-Ontarian' in Southwestern Ontario for most of her elementary school years. And so although she is a refugee from Kigali, her attachment to the historical and contemporary struggles of French-Canadian Francophones speaks to her multiple roots/routes. Some Francophone educators might dismiss her response (reflecting the affirming 'mission' of the school curriculum), but Quell (2002) complicates this response by questioning if French-speaking immigrants who participate in the struggles of

Francophone minority communities, will truly be "sharing the fruits of that struggle" because the integration of new "Francophones" is unfamiliar to the Francophone majority (p. 4). Returning to Karen's response, her sense of the world is wrapped up in a historicized and contemporary discourse of English hegemony to be sure, but it also confused by a postcolonial discourse of the subaltern. I hear Karen's response and her dual silence (what she is not saying coupled with the potential of being silenced by the category of Other), and wonder how the 'subaltern Francophone' can speak in a way that carries authority and meaning, given the dominant practices of representing Francophone curriculum and community.

Having read Spivak's landmark text (1995), "Can the subaltern speak?", based on the strength and collusion of colonialism and patriarchy, I believe that it is extremely difficulty for the subaltern (e.g. marginalized non-French Canadian and non-White Francophones) to be heard in a predominantly White 'French Canadian' community. By subaltern, Spivak refers primarily to 'Third World' and Indian women, but also to other disempowered subjects such as peasants and workers, whose voices have been silenced by colonial discourses of power and representation (Morton, 2003). While Spivak (1995) provides a feminist critique of postcolonialism and urges women's histories and lives be taken into account, her usage of the term subaltern is also flexible "to accommodate social identities and struggles (such as women and the colonised)" because those who cannot speak have not been recognized nor represented in dominant narratives of colonial or élite nationalist histories (Morton, 2003, p. 45, p. 51). To confuse matters, Spivak not only stresses the importance of describing the histories, voices and experiences of the 'subaltern', she also challenges people's attempts at fully representing or speaking on behalf of subaltern groups: ultimately, it is the subaltern group – defined by its difference from those in power – that must speak, but within the confines of dominant power structures the marginalized voice may not be heard (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 2002b, pp. 218-219).

Returning to the notion of a 'subaltern Francophone' and Karen's response, I wonder how Karen's response should be interpreted, because when she speaks, she does so within dominant/colonial discourses and, in turn, she – as a subaltern Francophone – may not be heard. As Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin (2002b) write, "One cannot construct a category of the subaltern that has an effective voice clearly and unproblematically identifiable as such, a voice that does not at the same time occupy many other possible speaking positions" (p. 218). Responses like Karen's may be marginalized because not only can a French Canadian "know the scene," but so too can a Francophone immigrant (Spivak, 1987, cited in Young, 2003, p. 110). Therefore, 'French Canadian' Francophones, or the majority of the province's Francophone community, can no longer make such 'nationalist' claims of knowing, for example, what it is like to be a French-speaking minority within a predominantly English milieu. At the same time, 'subaltern Francophones' can also occupy other subject positions and further speak to questions of difference. In Quell's (2002) national ethnographic study of immigrants living in Francophone minority communities, as in Moke Ngala's (2006) local study of Black African Francophone youth in urban Alberta, immigrants young and old want to integrate into the Francophone community and be understood. While Karen has appropriated the struggles of Franco-Albertans (and Franco-Ontarians), will they include hers? Will Francophone 'minority' communities speak for her?

In Canada's Francophone communities, subaltern subjects exist and they tend to be non-White French-speaking immigrants and refugees from former French and Belgian colonies. In Canada, these Francophone peoples constitute the colonized because they are subject to the hegemony of the French ruling class in Québec, and if living outside Québec, they are subject to a double hegemony: of the English ruling class in the rest of Canada as well as of the smaller French ruling class within the English province. Put another way, even the term 'Francophone', let alone 'French Canadian', conceals important differences between French-speaking groups because they are differently located – socially, culturally, linguistically, politically, religiously, and historically. Reflecting on Karen's response about not letting the "English control" and how "le français est là", helps me better appreciate how Francophone Others might very well share the constant struggles of belonging, being recognized and being accepted as equals but, at the same time, unsettling normative notions of the French Canadian nation. On est ici aussi. Who is unsettling whom? The historical route of Francophone education is not one – it is many.

The responses of Léonie, Brian, Jean-Michel and Karen all set the stage for being here in Alberta – as French speakers – but their collective story also troubles the historical route of Francophone education. Their responses suggest a continuum of curriculum stories, from privileged settler stories told and learned at school to lived experiences of being marginalized as a French-speaking Francophone in a predominantly English milieu. A continuum of constructed dominant historical and cultural perspectives and conflicting definitions of the multilayered postcolonial Francophone. For example, the hegemonic Franco-Albertan 'colony' and their hardship settler stories of sowing wheat fields as well as the seeds of faith, family and nation, as told in the classrooms of Francophone schools, have been – and continue to be – integral to the self-identification and self-definition of the 'Franco-Albertan' Francophone. Furthermore, Francophone education in Alberta, whose primary mandate is to secure a sense of belonging to the French language and the Francophone community, articulates a particular worldview in order to affirm their place – and their nation – legitimizing their settler narrative. "The settler," write Johnston & Lawson (2005), "seeks to establish a nation, and therefore needs to become native and to write the epic of the nation's origin" (p. 365). The increasing presence of the Francophone Other on the prairies problematizes the politics of representation, let alone of recognition, for 'French Canadian' Francophones in Alberta. Francophone educators can no longer downplay the tension between and among 'settler colonies' and must take into account a complicated web of historical discourses.

While these four participants come from different social locations and come together as products of the Francophone school in Alberta, they all conclude that French is here because it was (settled) here and that Francophones should continue to speak French (de se dire). There is a legitimate Alberta français because Franco-Albertans had sown their routes with the French language and school system. This is their collective heritage. This is what young Francophones in Alberta have been taught. These are the settler stories they have been told. The traditional Franco-Albertan route recognizes the founding families – White, Catholic, and French-speaking – who worked tirelessly to defend family, faith and nation via the Francophone school. Indeed, these Franco-Albertans, whose social location is deemed historically significant, sowed their ties to this prairie land: "Nos ancêtres ont semé beaucoup plus que du blé. Ils ont semé une façon d'être, de se voir, de se dire et de se vouloir" (Levasseur-Ouimet, 1991, p. 4). But if renewal and growth are key to the vitality of the Francophone (school) community, what happens when student narratives of today traverse the plains of the past? What happens when stories of Franco-Alberta history, which have been so integral to Franco-Albertan self-definition, are not really "settled"? What happens when routes of history and geography intersect and the narrative of Francophone education needs to be mapped out and told differently?

Troubling the geographical route of Francophone education

The Francophone community of today cannot be thought of in the singular, and neither can Francophone education conceive of its school community in this way. It is important to take into account the geographical effects of the francophonie, a significant component of subjectivity (e.g. Chambers, 1999; Sumara, Davis & Laidlaw, 2001) or Francophone worldview (Tétu, 1999). Currently, in 2007, Francophone schools in Alberta (and elsewhere across Canada) need to reconsider the interplay of past, present and future, along with the discourses of language, belonging and identity, because the (school) community has become heterogeneous. And such heterogeneity speaks to the importance of geography in an era of increased migration and rapid change. While Gérin-Lajoie (2004) stresses the changing situation in Ontario's Francophone community, it also applies to Alberta's:

> On est en effet passé d'une communauté francophone homogène sur le plan de la langue et de la culture françaises à une communauté francophone **éclatée**, dont les pratiques langagières et culturelles sont de plus en plus diversifiées et dans un étant de mouvance perpétuelle (p. 171, my emphasis).

It is important to point out, though, that the creation of the first two Franco-Albertan schools in 1984, one in Calgary and the other in Edmonton, was done at a time when the Franco-Albertan community was homogeneous, that is, White, Catholic, French Canadian, and French-English bilingual. Even in 1994, when Franco-Albertans won the right to governance over their own schools and school districts, the Francophone school community was still relatively homogeneous. That is no longer the case.

As previously mentioned, the world Francophonie is loosely defined by the French Sprachraum, which spans several continents. However, as Léonie points out, not all "Francophones" of La Francophonie know where French is spoken.

> *Mon frère est allé en Europe au printemps avec l'école puis il parlait français. Pour eux* [les Européens], *tous les francophones viennent de la France ou du Québec, mais c'est pas comme ça.*

Collectively, it is the French language that brings Francophones from near and far together. *La langue qui nous rassemble*. But is it a language that reflects a particular place? The French language has always been considered "l'élément définisseur de la francophonie canadienne" (Allaire, 2001, p. 209), but it also situates us in space. Boissonneault (2004) suggests that the act of speaking identifies us – geographically: "Elle [la langue] nous identifie davantage lorsqu'on y fait appel pour se dire. De surcroît, une précision structurale nous situe dans un lieu géographique et nous différencie de ceux avec qui nous partageons la même langue ou le même territoire" (p. 167).

Léonie takes issue with French being recognized outside France and Québec because the international language of French is spoken beyond these places. Outside these French centres (historically, politically, culturally and linguistically speaking), however, French can potentially occupy a privileged place because of where we are.

French, as an official language of Canada, and its ensuing national state policies, measures and laws, protects French-speaking Francophones in Alberta. Nevertheless, the battle against English assimilation is still very real. In her article *Chez-nous, nous vivons comme ça*, Levasseur-Ouimet (1991) describes the role of Alberta's Francophone school as follows:

> *Avec la communauté et la famille elle forme le* *contre-poids* *à la force de la langue et de la culture majoritaire. L'école est aussi le moyen de récupérer ceux qui sont déjà assimilés* (p. 12, my emphasis).

Francophone education is expected to "correct linguistic and cultural **erosion**," that is, combat assimilation (Alberta Learning, 2001, p. 9, my emphasis). Because the French language and Francophone identity are so intertwined, the Francophone school is called upon to strengthen the sense of belonging and linguistic-cultural identity of its students. However, with alarming rates of assimilation, especially in the Prairie provinces, even the Government of Canada is seeking solutions to this enduring problem. In fact, recruiting French-speaking immigrants in Francophone communities outside Québec is seen as one solution to this major challenge (Canada, 2004; Jedwab, 2002). And Jean-Michel agrees. He sees the positive attributes of French-speaking immigrants in Alberta and Canada, especially when these immigrants come from places where French is strong.

> *Je trouve c'est bien parce que, nous autres au Canada, on serait dans un plus gros trou s'il n'y avait pas d'immigrants parce qu'ils nous aident beaucoup dans plein de façons. Puis, moi, je trouve que c'est bien correct. Ça aide puis ça change notre culture. Ils peuvent venir de places où le français est très fort puis nous encourager à le parler, comme du Québec. Puis le plus de gens qu'on a dans une culture, pas toujours, mais le plus de gens qu'on a dans une culture le plus qu'elle va être forte.*

Jean-Michel, too, is preoccupied with the vitality of the French language, but the culture as well. He also recognizes that French-speaking immigrants come to Alberta via Québec, which up until recently (due to Alberta's economic boom, as well as Canada's and Québec's immigration policies), has been the preferred pattern of settlement for most French-speaking immigrants generally.

The official discourse of the state characterizes the French-speaking immigrant as the strong Francophone, linguistically speaking. Moreover, their origins are rooted in home countries that are members of the geo-linguistic entity that is La Francophonie, *la grande communauté d'expression française*. Although French-speaking immigrants (and refugees) have become the new *contre-poids* to ailing Francophone communities such as Alberta, often their mother tongue is neither French nor English, which further blurs the boundaries of who is Francophone in Canada. This is the case of Sophie, Karen and Rania.

I asked Sophie if teachers at the Francophone school have reason to worry about students losing their French, as it was in my day when I was a junior high student.

> *Oui, ils ont raison parce que, à* [ville dans le sud-ouest de l'Ontario], *on parlait jamais en français. On commençait à oublier quelques mots.* [Je ne me sentais] *pas trop bien parce que quand tu commences à oublier quelques mots, comme tu oublies de plus en plus. En quelque temps, tu vas oublier tout.*

In other words, forgetting one's French means losing one's language. It is implied that language loss equals loss of identity – in the singular. However, Sophie feels bad about having to struggle in French. Her silence urges me to continue, opening the discussion to other language-identity struggles. Sophie, who ultimately describes herself as being 'from A[illegible]a', shares with me the difficulty of juggling and remembering three languages: Rwandese, French, and English.[59] While she always speaks Rwandese and French with her mother, she speaks English with her siblings.

> *It's 'cause sometimes I kind of forget words, and then, like, I don't remember and I would say it in French or in English and then in my language. So I would just say it in English, and she* [my mother] *wouldn't really get it. Then, I would just explain it* [in French]. *But with my brothers and sisters, I speak English.*

When Sophie talks about her mother tongue, she says 'my language'. Whether or not she is implying 'the language of my people,' she embodies a collective history and memory. For example, Rwanda carries overlapping linguistic imperial legacies; Kinyarwanda is the national and official language of Rwanda, but two other national and official languages, French and English, may also have contributed to (re)produce a colonial frame of mind (Willinsky, 1998, p. 206). Now on Canadian soil, Sophie attempts to speak in either French or English before speaking her mother's language(s), le Rwandais (and French). She is most comfortable speaking English, linguistically speaking. However, when she describes what it means to be a French-English bilingual at school and a Rwandais-French bilingual at home, another inbetweenness emerges.

> *Because sometimes I speak English 'cause English is easier to speak than French. And then I speak French with some people because they don't really get it. They don't really get English. Like, I don't really speak English to my mom because she doesn't really get English, so* [I speak] *Rwandais mixed with French.*

Sophie's lives between and among languages, official languages and a home language. Her linguistic experience speaks to the geography of a global Francophone imaginary and to the difficulty of representing the complexity of 'the Francophone'. After all, the Francophonie cannot ignore its national-imperial linguistic history project, one "that is not yet fully past but stands to be transformed" (Willinsky, 1998, p. 207). By a transformed Francophone community, I refer to how students like Sophie are thinking of their own place within the francophonie: she identifies herself not only as Francophone but also as *Franco-Albertaine*, along with acknowledging losing the language of 'the Francophone'.

---

[59] The first one-on-one interview with Sophie took place mostly in English, while the second individual interview was mostly in French. Like with all participants, I invited them to speak to me in the language of their choice. One of these choices included *franglais*, a mix of French and English, because we all live between the two. In retrospect, considering my position as a teacher in a Francophone school, I wonder how dominant practices of representation influenced their 'choice'.

Sophie's self-representation also expands on a French-English dichotomy of being inbetween. Sophie concludes that she would like to take a class to learn Rwandais for fear of losing her mother's language: "*'Cause, like, with English and French at school, you have to learn more and more, and maybe I might lose it* [le rwandais]." I am drawn to Sophie's response, not only because she seems to recognize the play of language and identity, but also because her language strikes me as honest. Sophie, who has always been a student in either a French African school or a Francophone Canadian school, is cognizant that she is losing her French, the language of the 'nation' and one of two recognized languages that will help her "get a job" later on. At the same time, of course, she, like other French-speaking immigrants and refugees, can be assimilated in terms of their own 'home' culture and language. It is important to distinguish this assimilation from French-to-English assimilation, because some Francophone immigrants are at least doubly assimilated. Karen speaks more specifically to the multilayered loss one experiences when one's mother tongue is lost.

> *Je parle plus anglais que français* [et rwandais]. *Je suis habituée à l'anglais. Et même au Rwanda, je parlais même, je parlais plus le rwandais à 5 ans que maintenant. Parce qu'on était là au Rwanda. Ici,*

> *on parle le français et l'anglais et personne connaît le rwandais. Je le parle juste avec ma famille.*
>
> [...] *je ne parle jamais le rwandais avec mes frères et soeurs. Mais je veux. J'essaie des fois, mais j'oublie beaucoup. Donc, il faut faire un effort, I guess. On perd notre identité, d'où on vient. Puis on perd d'où est-ce qu'on vient et on est dans une autre place au Canada. On devient plus Canadien et pas beaucoup Africain.*

Karen's response highlights how she thinks about Africa and Canada, and how they are other ways to think about the world – human, rather than material (Young, 2003, p. 16). When I ask her what she means by becoming more Canadian, she equates it with becoming less African in other ways.

> *Comme d'avoir plus d'habitudes qu'on a en Afrique qu'au Canada. Um..., bien, on veut plus. En Afrique, on n'a pas beaucoup de vêtements. On peut porter deux vêtements trois jours de suite. Mais, ici, on veut plus et on se change même quatre fois par jour.*

Although they identify strongly with the francophonie, Karen and Sophie offer a different sense of marginalization. Both their responses trouble 'our' sense of 'Canada' and the 'francophonie', while complicating simplistic notions of English/French and rich/poor. Francophone education must take notice how Francophones face linguistic & cultural assimilation (and integration) differently because assimilation takes different forms and because belonging to the Franco-Albertan (school) community is secured when 'good' Francophones demonstrate ascribed Francophoneness. For Willinsky (1998), "there remains a responsibility among educators to bring to these lessons an understanding of the [French/Francophone] imperative and all that it entails" (p. 208). Such an approach could begin by recognizing that there are multiple and overlapping Francophone spaces and forms of belonging. In her article, *Identité choisie, imposée, suggérée*, Bergeron (1999) argues that "il faut reconnaître que si les identités peuvent se superposer, les espaces aussi le peuvent. On peut se situer dans plusieurs espaces à la fois" (p. 154). I prefer Bergeron's use of the word space, rather than community, because it is more encompassing. Even La Francophonie offers a broadened definition of Francophone spaces and belonging. *L'espace francophone* represents:

> *une réalité non exclusivement géographique, ni même linguistique mais aussi culturelle,* [qui] *réunit tous ceux qui, de près ou de loin, éprouvent ou expriment une certaine appartenance à la langue française ou aux cultures francophones. Cette dénomination, bien qu'apparamment floue, est certainement la plus féconde. Elle recouvre des situations très variés* (AFI, 2006, p. 8).

This somewhat official definition speaks to the possibility of opening up the discourses of Francophone identity in Canada and throughout the world. It also invites me to reconsider the criteria of Francophoneness (primarily French-language fluency and a sense of belonging to a Francophone culture and community – all in the singular), especially in light of the Francophones who have chosen to call Alberta home and who have arrived under different circumstances: born here (Rania, Jean-Michel, and Léonie); economic hard times in Ontario, Québec or the Maritimes, and/or Alberta's booming economy (Brian); refugees escaping the conflict in Rwanda, the Congo, Somalia, and so on (Karen and Sophie); immigrants and refugees seeking better opportunities for themselves and their families (Rania, Karen, and Sophie). Regardless of the reason, each family brings with them the history and memories, language, religion and culture of their home (province, region, country). Simply put, if we use only language as the determining factor of Francophoneness, then the complexity of the Francophone population in Alberta and Canada is simply ignored. Moreover, French-speaking immigrants, for the most part, consider themselves to be Francophone (e.g. Canada, 2003; Quell, 2002).

Drawing on the work of Johnston & Lawson (2005) on settler postcolonialism, the presence of Francophone Other, namely from Africa, challenges the dichotomy between majority and minority status in several ways. Recalling Karen's response to becoming Canadian and self-identifying as a French speaker led me to question the phenomenon of assimilation in Western Canada. If French-Canadian Francophones continue to scream foul against English hegemonic assimilation without taking into account other forms of assimilation of Other Francophones, then they are "self-privileging" the charge against assimilation (p. 365). Consequently, other Francophones are deemed Other in more ways than one and are caught between a rock (English Alberta) and a hard place (historic Franco-Alberta). Living in Alberta requires some level of competency in English to integrate into society, namely the workforce and the Francophone school, to a lesser degree. At the same time, the Francophone school is fighting for the preservation and promotion of French. Assimilation of African ways, as Karen describes, to become Canadian is one form of difference (and domination); in becoming 'Canadian' (with English as the dominant subject position), then, Karen's French-speaking subject position is being assimilated yet again by another difference. In each case, the 'imperial centre' shifts: the (French and/or English) Canadian 'settler' colonizes the French-speaking Franco-African (linguistically) and, in turn, the (French and/or English) Albertan 'settler' colonizes the French-speaking Afro-Francophone (culturally). Francophone education needs to take notice that the Alberta francophonie has many roots, thus many centres, as well as many routes, thus many languages.

The continuum of the francophonie must be situated in both time and space: the Franco-Albertan story is one to be thought of (recognized), told (shared) and heard (pronounced), that is, (se) dire. For Levasseur-Ouimet (1991), the Franco-Albertan community must be heard and takes its rightful place:

> *Dans un Canada où chacun cherche à redéfinir sa place il faut que la communauté franco-albertaine se fasse entendre, qu'elle prenne sa place. Il faut alors qu'elle se donne les moyens de parler et que cette parole représente une vision commune, une âme et des orientations communes* (p. 9).

But who defines this common vision? And for whom are such common goals envisioned? And who gets to articulate this vision? It is becoming increasingly difficult to speak of a common vision when the Franco-Albertan community is not singular: there are multiple communities, thus multiple belongings. As Gérin-Lajoie (2004) points out,

> *Le tissu social a donc changé de façon significative au fil des ans, ce qui nous place en présence non plus d'une communauté unique, mais plutôt de multiples communautés d'appartenance. Dans cette nouvelle conjoncture, les francophones de l'Ontario* [et de l'Alberta] *sont donc appelés à se redéfinir, tant au sein de la francophonie canadienne qu'au sein de la francophonie mondiale* (p. 172).

Francophone identity is inextricably bound by language, but the relationship between the geography of the Francophonie and linguistic diversity is troubling the French language-identity link. The Franco-Albertan community cannot afford to ignore the geo-linguistic route of the francophonie because as Onésime Reclus' 1887 writing reminds us, "notre langue dépasse nos frontières" (Chaudenson, 1999, pp. 323-324). Rather than resent or fear the idea of linguistic diversity blurring borders, the school community should embrace the idea of multilayered Francophone spaces.

Troubling the linguistic (cultural) route of Francophone education

What does the future hold for an expanding Franco-Albertan community? With increasing rates of exogamous families, what is the place of French and of English? With increasing rates of newcomers to Alberta, what is the place of other languages and associated cultures? What hold does language have on the discursive production of Francophone identities among youth in Alberta?

In terms of French-speaking communities (*communautés d'expression française*), international, national and local discourses all stress the importance of protecting and promoting French. Deniau (2001), President of the Comité de la Francophonie, feels strongly about valuing French and the idea of the Francophonie: "La langue française doit être valorisée; l'idée francophone doit continuer à progresser. Non seulement parce qu'elle sert notre nation, mais aussi parce qu'elle est le ressort d'un humanisme pour l'avenir" (p.117). The Government of Canada also seeks to serve the nation (or the idea of two official nations with official languages) and, in the case of minority Francophone communities, this translates into preserving and promoting French in schools.

From elementary school to graduate school, I have been in various Francophone educational settings in Northern and Southern Ontario, New Brunswick, British Columbia, and Alberta. What is common to all, when considering the discourse of assimilation, is having repeatedly heard teachers say the following: *l'anglais s'attrape* and *on va perdre notre français*. It seems that English is quite a strong virus in Alberta. As Allain (2001) explains, Alberta's French future is particularly fragile: "Pour l'Alberta, plus que pour les autres communautés francophones du Canada, se pose de façon aiguë la question de la continuité linguistique. Pour cette province, l'indice est au-dessous de 0,35, certainement l'un des plus bas au pays" (p. 178). And so what becomes of the place of French in Francophone schools?

One of the greatest difficulties (and ongoing sagas) teachers face in the Francophone school has been in finding creative ways to encourage the use of French among "Francophone" students. One of the primary mandates of the Francophone school is to produce and promote linguistic Francophoneness. This has proven to be a daunting project given alarming assimilation rates in a predominantly English milieu, especially in the case of Alberta. As the student participants' responses will illustrate, *les dires* of young Francophones can sometimes be contradictory, that is, when it comes to speaking French, more or less, or not at all. What I find interesting is how these young people, all products of the Francophone school (in Alberta and Ontario), contest the boundaries of being 'good' Francophones. Alberta Education's expectations, however, are stated clearly: French is to be "lived and appreciated as a vehicle for nourishing a culture, a community and a way of being" (Alberta Learning, 2001, p. 19). The raison d'être is to counter assimilation while also "awaken[ing] and strengthen[ing] Francophone students' cultural and linguistic identity and pride" (p. 12). In her article *Chez-nous, nous vivons comme ça*, Levasseur-Ouimet (1991) describes the mission of Alberta's Francophone school as follows:

> *L'école française a pour but d'assurer la survie de la communauté. C'est à l'école que revient le rôle de transmettre aux futures générations cette manière d'être, de se vouloir, de se voir et de se dire* (p. 12).

But what if young Francophones *se disent* in both French and English, preferably in English, or in another language altogether? What happens when speaking French is contested in traditional Francophone spaces such as the Francophone school? What happens when students take the place of a spoken Francophone identity and broaden their sense of identity and pride with bilingualism?

All student participants are proud to be French-English bilinguals, and research with secondary and postsecondary students in other urban centres in Alberta and Ontario (e.g. Boissonneault, 1996, 2004; Gérin-Lajoie, 2003) and across Canada (e.g. Landry, Deveau & Allard, 2006) also indicates that bilingual identity is increasingly common in minority contexts. What I find interesting about my participants' responses is how they (re)produce the same discourses of the Francophone school: being Francophone is anchored in one's ability to speak French and to show pride in one's Francophoneness (including the community's). Of the six participants, all but Rania talk about taking pride in being 'good' Francophones. For example, when on 'msn' with her school friends, Rania always communicates in English because, according to her, they always speak in English.

> *En anglais. Je sais pas, parce qu'on parle toujours en anglais. Parce que je ne peux pas vraiment parler bien en français. Parce que je parle plus bien en anglais qu'en français. Puis on parle toujours en français à l'école et c'est vraiment tannant. Alors, quand on est à la maison, on parle toujours en anglais ou quand on est hors de l'école.*

Rania associates her (in)ability to speak French well to a language that is difficult, rather than seeing a language of resistance – her resistance to the school's strategy. She continues by explaining her take on why speaking French is *tannant*. Rather than reveal how insisting on speaking French is another persistent ennui of the Francophone school, this trilingual girl explains that French words are hard to say: "*Parce que c'est dûr à parler en français. Il y a des mots qui sont vraiment dûrs de les dire.*" And when Rania's beautiful smile turns to laughter, I ask her why she is laughing.

> *Parce que c'est drôle.* [Rania is laughing] *Parce que c'est une école francophone et on parle anglais tout le temps.*

Actually, it is funny (read ironic) because it is a Francophone school, heavily burdened by bureaucratic discourses (and budgets), and students are always speaking English.

What I appreciate about Rania's comment is her honesty. She paints a realistic portrait of linguistic practices and tactics. Rania, an Honour Roll student, is obedient upon being told by her teachers to speak French and she switches on command because she thinks it counts on her report card.

> *C'est juste comme parce que les madames sont toujours: « Parlez en français. Pourquoi vous êtes à une école francophone si vous ne parlez pas en français ? » So, ya.* [...] *Je dis okay.* [She laughs.] *Comme je vais parler en français maintenant parce que ça compte sur le bulletin. Ya, mais j'aime parler le français aussi.* [She laughs.] *J'aime parler le français parce que des fois comme s'il y a quelqu'un qui est vraiment méchant à toi, tu peux juste leur dire des choses en français, puis ils ne peuvent pas comprendre. Puis c'est la même chose pour l'arabe.*

Rania's loaded response illustrates how the Francophone school is a constructed space and how students will use tactics to contest and/or conform to that space. Rania's everyday practices seem so natural that the political dimension may be overlooked. Having read de Certeau (1988), I know that many everyday practices are tactical in character. Francophone students like Rania and her friends have 'tactics' of resistance because they lack power, while their teachers have grand 'strategies' because they exercise the discursive power to impose the French language, that is coerce student compliance because 'good' students speak French all of the time. Spivak's idea of strategic essentialism also comes to mind because, while Rania's response offers a critique of essentialist categories of 'Francophoneness', it also uses the same categories to justify the linguistic and cultural 'mission' of the Francophone school. The question of strategic essentialism can help illustrate why Francophones in a minority setting (myself included) embrace 'our' essentialist characteristics. As Morton (2003) explains, "For minority groups, in particular, the use of essentialism as a short-term strategy to affirm a political identity can be effective, as long as this identity does not then get fixed as an essential category by a dominant group" (p. 75). This is the challenge of Francophone education and Francophone minority communities: to "use" essentialism strategically in order to "suit" a specific situation rather than offer a long-term solution (p. 75) to, for instance, construct and determine 'our' place in Canadian society, history and memory. For the ongoing affirmation of 'the Francophone' (in essentialist and singular ways) can obscure attempts at redefining 'Francophoneness' in more open and creative ways in an increasingly plural community and society.

Moreover, stories about the Francophone school experience concern the characterization of linguistically-based Francophone pride. For Karen, the Francophone school in Ontario and Alberta are similar in that students are encouraged to speak French and be proud of being Francophone.

> *Bien, ils* [les enseignants] *nous encouragent à parler plus en français et à être fier d'être francophone. Ici, on parle plus en français, je ne sais pas pourquoi. En Ontario, on parle anglais souvent, même si on doit parler en français. On est comme habitué à parler anglais. Mais ici, on parle beaucoup français.*

Upon her arrival, Karen was surprised to hear so much French spoken in her Alberta high school. This clearly contradicts what the other participants have said. Karen's comment is noteworthy, not only because it speaks to how discursive power is a spatial practice among minority contexts across Canada, but also because it speaks to Karen's repeated surprise of Alberta having a strong French-speaking identity. As previously discussed, Karen is preoccupied with her sense of losing her Rwandais and her sense of becoming less African in Canada.

Brian speaks to another level of student practices, his own and that of his friends. With his friends, Brian speaks almost always in French, even to his friends who have one

Anglophone parent. Brian seems puzzled by the fact that friends from exogamous families don't want to remain bilingual.

> *Oui,* [on se parle] *en français. Well,* [un ami], *lui, il parle français, mais je trouve ça bizarre à cause sa mère est anglophone puis seulement son père puis sa soeur parlent français. Donc, je trouve ça un peu bizarre pourquoi, lui, il parle seulement français* [avec ses amis]. *Je penserais comme qu'il parlerait plus anglais. Puis ya, les autres, c'est comme* [une amie], *aussi à cause son père* [anglophone], *il parle anglais. Je penserais qu'ils voudraient garder leur français et leur anglais.*

Recalling a previous response, Brian contradicts himself here. On a personal level, it is important to him that his friends maintain their French-English bilingualism. On a political level, it is important that French resist English (both in Alberta and in Canada) and that French be seen as the public language it should be in an officially bilingual country. Generally, his contradictory responses speak to all of the student stories because their stories mark out spatial and linguistic boundaries, the inbetweenness of relations with spaces at once familiar and foreign (here and there). Put another way, you are what you speak. From a poststructuralist perspective, identity is often characterized as contingent, continuous, and conflicting. For example, Belsey (2002), Kerby (1991), Hall (1994) and Richardson (2001) remind me that identities are made by language, but that identities also make language. In other words, identity can be understood as a production and a process while at the same time being limited by language. As Belsey (2002) writes, "Lives are narratable as coherent in terms of the categories language makes available" (p. 51). In Francophone minority contexts, this means troubling the linguistic route of Francophone education because only certain categories are made available to staff, students, family and community members.

Recalling Brian's earlier response in the previous chapter on naming one's identity in the singular, I ask him why it is better to be one thing. My question prompts him to reconsider his categorical answer.

> *Oh, je sais pas vraiment comme... well, non, je pense que c'est meilleur d'être deux choses à cause que si tu parles deux langues puis tout. Puis tu parlerais presque seulement la langue que tu es.*

Be the language that you are, or you are what you speak. Interestingly, Léonie is frank when she describes how she speaks French. Léonie, who comes from an exogamous family, believes that English has an influence on what Alberta Francophones do and how they speak. For her, she is aware that she speaks in between French and English, and cites common expressions.

> *Je pense que l'anglais a une influence sur qu'est-ce qu'on fait, puis comment on parle. Quand tu vas aller taper qu'est-ce qu'on dit maintenant, ça va être comme « ya and uh like puis you know like ya. » Ça va être de même parce que depuis que je suis petite, c'est comme ça que c'est parce que mon père est anglophone puis ma mère est francophone.* ***C'est comme des expressions entre.*** *Quand je parle en anglais, je dis des expressions en français et quand je parle en français, je dis des expressions en anglais. C'est comme ça quand j'étais plus jeune, c'est comme ça que je parlais, puis maintenant, c'est plutôt naturel pour moi de parler de même.*

Furthermore, as Léonie explains, teachers should encourage students to speak French because when they do, they are also encouraging them to be 'more Francophone.'

> *À l'école moi puis mes amis on parle, like, l'anglais beaucoup, right? Puis tous les professeurs sont toujours comme « Parle plus français » na na na. Puis comme okay, you know, so ya, il y a beaucoup de personnes alentour de moi qui m'encouragent d'être plus francophone, de vivre comme, like, d'être fière d'être francophone puis de parler français parce que, bien, c'est comme vraiment ma langue maternelle, I guess.*

Interestingly, Léonie now identifies French as her mother tongue (in the first interview, it was English). Again, de Certeau (1988) helps me make sense of Léonie's story of inbetweenness and the articulation of place as a signifying practice: "Stories about places are makeshift things. They are composed with the world's debris" (p. 107). And stories about the Francophone school are littered with the persistent threat of assimilation and of exogamous families who speed up the process, on the one hand, and littered with the production of 'good' Francophones who are proud and militant.

Except for Rania, all participants link a strong Francophone linguistic identity to a strong sense of pride.[60] How they make these connections differ. For Léonie, there is no such thing as a good or bad Francophone. One should aspire to be who they are. Effort is required.

> *Juste être comment tu es. Pour moi, il n'y a pas de « être un bon francophone » ou de « être un mauvais francophone ». Comme, oui, il y a des personnes qui ne peuvent pas parler la langue trop bien et il y a d'autres personnes qui sont vraiment avancées en français. [...] Encore, ça dépend de comment, like, tu es. D'être francophone, je trouve, c'est d'essayer ton possible puis d'être tout ce que tu peux être. Juste essayer ton possible, like, de parler le français plus, de juste, like, si tu vas à une école francophone, then tu peux juste parler plus le français là, puis après tu peux comme like aider les personnes. Ou si tu vas à une école d'immersion même, tu peux juste encore faire ton possible en français puis juste apprendre plus à propos de ta culture puis tout ça.*

It is interesting that Léonie brings up the French Immersion school because four of the six participants made some sort of distinction between French Immersion and Francophone schools. While all participants recognized that French immersion students were French-second language speakers, Léonie seems to accept that not all Francophone youth attend the Francophone school, although she emphasizes their need to learn French and about their culture.

---

[60] Although Rania does not make the Francophone pride and French language link, she does identify strongly with the francophonie. And this articulation of Francophoneness should not be dismissed. For Gérin-Lajoie (2004), a bilingual identity has to do with "une sorte de nouvel état identitaire" – a conclusion that she embraces, not just because her results were based on 110 days of classroom observation and 115 interviews with Franco-Ontarian high school students, but mainly because students who self-identify with bilingualism also have a strong sense of belonging with the francophonie (pp. 173-174). Of note, Rania is proud of her Arabic linguistic and cultural identity.

Jean-Michel, on the other hand, better illustrates the tension between the Francophone/French Immersion dichotomy. Jean-Michel attributes Francophones' lack of "Francophone" pride to the fact that Francophones in Alberta speak less French than in Québec:

> *Je trouve ça un peu bizarre que certains gens qui vont à une école d'immersion sont plus fiers de parler français que nous autres, que certains de nous autres.*
>
> *Parce qu'ici, les francophones ne parlent pas toujours français. Ils ne parlent pas toujours français avec d'autres francophones. Ils se parlent entre eux en anglais...c'[est] décevant peut-être.*

I find Jean-Michel's comments very interesting (and very political). Must Francophones always speak French to one another? If not, can you still belong? Dallaire & Denis (2000) observe that French as first vs. second/other language causes "discursive strain" because not all French speakers are equal and because this distinction "competes with the assumption that those whose mother tongue is French have a stronger claim to Francophone identity" (n.p.). Put another way, Francophones in Alberta are not so much a nation but a language group – and a problematic linguistic group at that. This transformation, from traditional French Canadian Catholic nation to multilingual, multicultural and multireligious Francophone group, is not complete. Moreover, the linguistic route to Francophone education is further problematized because one's effort and commitment to the French language may no longer be solely contingent on pride in this place. According to Jean-Michel, Francophones here are less proud than Francophones elsewhere, although the culture here is rich.

> *En Alberta, on est une culture très riche parce qu'il y a des gens qui viennent de partout. Les francophones sont fiers de l'être [francophone], pour la plupart, surtout au Québec, moins ici.*
>
> *On est rare. Il n'y en a pas beaucoup et puis dans certaines places on est aussi moins fort comme francophones. On croit moins en notre culture ou on croit moins qu'on en a une.*

For Jean-Michel, Francophones should believe more in the richness of their expanding culture although Alberta Francophones are small in number. The Francophone school in a minority context has become a meeting place for sharing and belonging, *en français*, but also a meeting place for representing and producing Francophones to themselves and to others.

When contemplating the future of Francophone education through the poststructural and postcolonial prism of power relationships, how student participants' multiple Francophone subject positions are taken up and/or refused is telling. The Francophone school can make aware to young students the politics of language and resistance. When discussing how some Francophones are not comfortable with identifying themselves as Francophone, Léonie concludes that they should be proud of who they are even if they have yet to figure out why they are different.

> *Je pense que tous les francophones devraient être fiers de qui ils sont. Parce que, like, ils sont faits comme ça pour une raison, mais si ils ne l'ont pas trouvés.*

But Brian, who subscribes to the discourse of being a 'good' Francophone, stresses the importance of being proud to be Francophone, to speak your (French) language, to not be afraid to show it, to feel good with your language.

> *C'est d'être fier d'être francophone, de parler ta langue, de ne pas avoir peur de la démontrer ou comme d'être bien avec ta langue puis tout.*

Brian wants to be seen, not as Other, but as a legitimate Francophone, in his adoptive home province. This response entails, as Hoffman (1989) points outs, being at home in one's tongue.

> It's not that we all want to speak the King's English, but whether we speak Appalachian or Harlem English, or Cockney, or Jamaican Creole, we want to be at home in our tongue. We want to be able to give voice accurately and fully to ourselves and our sense of the world (p. 124).

Of what Hoffman and my participants speak is longing to be recognized, that is acknowledged and, to some degree, accepted. In the Canadian context of language is the politics of recognition, an expression I take to mean how people, as individuals and groups, seek to have their 'distinctiveness' recognized and respected. The battle for recognition is important for the vitality and survival of the Francophone community in Alberta, as for other identity groups. As Taylor (1994) points out in his essay *The Politics of Recognition*, understanding the identity-recognition link is crucial to people's own understanding of themselves and of others because, according to Taylor, identity is shaped by recognition, nonrecognition, or misrecognition. As Hélène Cixous suggests, "C'est l'autre qui fait mon portrait" (Calle-Gruber & Cixous, 1994, p. 23). If it is the other who makes one's portrait, and the portrait is misshaped so that a group or person is misrecognized by others, they "can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves" (Taylor, 1994, p. 25). Considering the responses of the young participants reminds us of their need, as a collective, to be recognized as *legitimate* Francophones *belonging* in Alberta, not reduced to a minority group, but rather respected as a group equal to Anglo-Albertans. It does not suffice to have certain collective rights:

public recognition coupled with "due respect" become vital to the designated "official language minority group" in Alberta. Of all participants, Brian is most vocal on this point of "due recognition":

> Nous *[les francophones]*, on était ici *[en Alberta]* plus avant vous *[les anglophones]*. Puis on devrait avoir plus de respect parce qu'on est un pays avec deux langues *[officielles]*. Alors, je trouve que c'est pas juste, que nous, qu'on se fait dire des choses comme « retournez au Québec » ou dans ta province. On dirait que les Anglais *[les anglophones]* essaient de tout envahir encore l'Alberta. Qu'ils nous laissent de la place. On a le droit d'être ici.

For Léonie, Brian, Jean-Michel and Karen in particular, it is not merely a political recognition of one's place; rather, it entails a (more) respectful and (over)due recognition of the history of this place. After all, young Francophones exist in Alberta.

Although student narratives help us give shape to understandings of Francophone identity formation, it is also important to re-examine the discursive implications of the "Francophone". Dallaire & Denis (2000), Dalley (2006) and Gérin-Lajoie (2003, 2004, 2006) are some of the Francophone authors in Canada who have been emphasizing the need to do just that. Their important work illustrates how the discourses of language, culture and identity circulating within Canada's Francophone communities have been positioned in competing, conflicting and even ambiguous ways. The French language has always been the identity marker par excellence, but it may be changing. With the French-English bilingual identity becoming more commonplace (e.g. Alberta Learning, 2001; Canada, 2003; Dalley, 2006; Landry, Deveau & Allard, 2006), Francophone education needs to re-examine its expectations that their "Francophone" students be "fully committed" to French first language education and in turn, ascribed notions of language, culture and identity.

The Francophone school has long been the cornerstone of institutional Francophone identity and the French language. But what happens when the Francophone community **expands**, becomes "***éclatée***"? This dissertation illuminates the tensions between Franco-Albertans and Francophone Others and the growing importance of becoming more inclusive. As Gérin-Lajoie (2004) writes, "l'école devra se faire beaucoup plus inclusive qu'elle n'a réussi à le faire jusqu'à présent" (p. 177). Consequently, the "linguistic, cultural and community **enterprise**" that is Francophone education in Alberta needs to be re-affirmed, rather than affirmed, that is, affirmed differently in an era of accelerating pluralism.[61] Even La Francophonie provokes Francophones throughout the world to reconsider their future. As Chaudenson (1999) emphasizes in *L'Année francophone internationale: An 2000*,

> Il est clair qu'il faut changer totalement de stratégie et que l'école ne peut plus être le seul mode de diffusion de la langue française. La stratégie [...] doit être **mondiale** puisque la francophonie l'est de plus en plus et qu'elle va désormais inclure bientôt (si ce n'est déjà fait) une majorité d'États où l'on ne peut compter sur l'école pour diffuser le français (p. 324, emphasis in original).

While French is an official language of Canada and while access to Francophone education guarantees French first language rights, problems of French preservation and promotion persist. However, my students' narrative understandings embrace plurality, a blurring of meaning(s), a revealing of multiple "Francophone" subject-positions. The need for multilayered narratives of identity can help us (re)imagine possibilities for the future because these narratives frame the local, global and inbetween contexts young

---

[61] As previously mentioned, Alberta Learning (2001) developed an educational policy and foundations document "affirming Francophone education" in Alberta. Specifically, Francophone education is defined as a "linguistic, cultural and community enterprise" meeting not only the needs of students but the needs of the community as well (p. 9). Ultimately, it signifies a question of survival on numerous levels.

Francophones live and this contextualization is translated into a cautionary tale about the narrow categories of linguistic and cultural identity.

Reconceptualizing the roots/routes of the francophonie

We need to conceive of more routes, historical, geographical, linguistic and cultural, because there are more roots to the francophonie in Alberta and Canada that need to acknowledged. In other words, not all Francophones in Canada are Francophone in the same way, and Francophones and non-Francophones must account for this difference (or these differences). Language is a point of (re)negotiation between Francophones living together in Alberta, an uneasy place caught between multiple worlds (Johnston & Lawson, 2005, p. 370). The discursive spaces and borders are especially porous because interrelated notions of identity and difference come together in increasingly complicated and unsettling ways. Interestingly, the theme for the 2007 *Journée internationale de la Francophonie*, as organized by the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie*, is *« Vivre ensemble, différents »*. But will we ever come together? If so, when? What happens then?

> *Que cette Journée soit l'occasion, pour tous, partout, sur les cinq continents, de fêter la langue française qui nous offre la chance formidable de communiquer par-delà les frontières et les océans, de nous rencontrer, d'entrecroiser nos cultures, nos traditions, nos imaginaires.*
>
> *Fêtons, ensemble, ce qui nous rapproche !*
> *Vivons ensemble, solidaires, ce qui nous sépare !*
> *Vivons et fêtons, ensemble, la Francophonie !*
>
> – Abdou DIOUF
> Secrétaire général de la Francophonie

The nerves of the Francophonie are togetherness, based on *la langue française*, coupled with difference. However, as "Francophones" throughout the world, our own nerves can be knit differently and in complex ways. Even in Alberta, Francophones are diasporic. But how far can the nerves extend when discursive routes embrace a message of "vivre ensemble" while different and diverse roots separate us?

What I have been long resisting is the singular Francophone school agenda because it strikes a nerve with me. I did as a child because my French-English exogamous family subject position unnerved the not-so-stable French Canadian frame of reference at the time. As a teacher 25 years later, my fixed French Canadian but hybrid minority Francophone subject position unnerves the not-so-stable Francophone frame of reference. And my participants speak to the difficulties and possibilites of being French-speaking and Francophone in Alberta, but not necessarily Franco-Albertan. Francophone schools have yet to explore issues of unstable French Canadian and Francophone identities, diasporic subjectivities, questionable narratives and troubling self-identifications and belongings in the (Franco)Canadian context. The strain of a plural society is clear: the notion of a 'true' Canadian national identity is neither fixed nor stable – it is imagined; the fear of losing a 'pure (laine)' French-Canadian identity plagues Francophone communities across Canada; and, the blurred borders and broken down identities of Francophones in Canada reveal the uncertain and unsuccessful attempts to colonize the Other.

The complex responses of my participants show that Canadian and Francophone identities are elusive and that a range of subject positions can shift in time and space. These young Francophones, by their very presence in the Francophone school system, challenge Canadians and Francophones alike to embrace the unsettling (school) stories and ghostly experiences that haunt the multicultural and postcolonial complexity that is 'English' and 'French Canada.' Recalling the ghost of Onésime Reclus, I wonder about the future of the linguistic and geographical landscape that is the francophonie. In 1887, he wrote:

> *L'avenir verra plus de francophones en Afrique et en Amérique du Nord que dans toute la francophonie d'Europe* (Chaudenson, 1999, p. 324).

Although l'Amérique française is in demographic decline, it is l'Afrique francophone that has become "l'enjeu central" and because of this "immense bassin de francophonie potentielle", the Franco-Albertan community is **re-emerging**. Whether or not the French geographer was prophetic, it becomes vital when discussing the **expanding** nature of the *francophonie albertaine* in an era of accelerating pluralism, to pay attention to the ghosts that haunt our curriculum lives. In the next section, Chapter 10, I suggest that the Franco-Albertan community not give up its ghosts in these postcolonial times.

CHAPTER 10

A QUESTION OF CURRICULUM

J'ai vraiment aucune idée si les personnes au Québec apprennent à propos de l'Alberta. Quand j'étais vraiment petite, en 3^e ou en 4^e [année], *on a appris beaucoup à propos du Québec et moi, je ne savais pas s'ils apprenaient à propos de nous. Alors, c'était vraiment weird. Mais j'aimerais ça, même juste un cours qui nous en dit plus sur où est-ce qu'on vit.*

– Léonie (Franco-Albertaine)

Il y en a beaucoup [d'anglophones en Alberta] *qui croient qu'on n'existe pas puis qu'il y a juste des écoles d'immersion française en Alberta et c'est les seuls gens qui parlent français ici. Il y en a d'autres qui savent qu'on existe, mais ils ne nous connaissent pas vraiment.*

– Jean-Michel (Franco-Albertain)

The school I went to when I was still in Africa, it was French. So, she *[my mother]* made sure to just come in and put me in a French school. She prefers French schools to English.

– Sophie (Franco-Albertaine, Franco-Ontarienne,
and Franco-Africaine)

How do curriculum discourses inform and interrupt narratives of Francophone identity?

Chapter 10 is devoted to an exploration of the focus group interview and how narratives shape curriculum (and vice versa), an idea and a place where the contingency of identities are lived out, in the classrooms of everyday experience. Grumet (1991) suggests that the everyday, or what she calls "the art of daily life" and "the practical knowledge that we bring with us from home", should be extended to the public world because our "real homework" is often relegated to memory. In this sense, students and teachers should recognize the primacy of daily life because "the choosing and naming of what matters and the presentation of those values for the perception and engaged participation of others are the deliberations that constitute curriculum development" (p. 75). If determining something that matters is learned at home, and if the places where we come from are increasingly multiple, varied and overlapping, then curriculum as lived becomes influenced by changing narratives of identity. With increasing ethnocultural diversity in Francophone communities, the francophonie becomes a more complex place where the French language, Francophone culture and identity – the stuff of Francophone curriculum – need to be re-considered and re-presented. For if the process of selecting and determining what matters to the Francophone school community is at the "very heart of curriculum" (p. 75), then curriculum development around discourses of language, culture and identity needs to be rethought. And paying attention to young people's lived experiences as Francophones in Alberta is one way to create room for rethinking Francophone identity and curriculum perspectives in more expansive and personal ways.

Grumet (1991) reminds me that, as I name French Canadian stories such as *La*

Chasse-galerie and remember my mother's and grandmother's singing of French Canadian songs, I need to look to the cultural and biological relations to curriculum because these have often been denied in both curriculum and schooling (pp. 80-81). Aoki (1991a) also defines curriculum as lived, as *the course of one's life*, and encourages teachers especially to pay attention to their "curriculum life" because curriculum is a journey that can be informed by personal biography (p. 9). In other words, lived experiences, experiences of everyday life, can inform concepts of curriculum, teaching and learning as well as shape personal involvement in curricular relations. Interestingly, they can also interrupt curricular concepts when the "order of daily life" is disrupted by a changing context. And as I witness the changing context of my school within a diasporic Francophone community, that is, the changing face of the "Francophone" student body, I wonder how discursive practices of knowledge shape our identities, create imaginary communities, and authorize who and what counts as Francophone identity, language, and culture (Britzman, 2003, pp. 251-252). The dilemma becomes whose 'dailiness' gets told and why is it (not) taught (Grumet, 1991). For Willinsky (2006), not only must multiple (and often alternative) lived experiences be acknowledged, but how the legacy of empire lives on in students' and teachers' lives through educational experiences must also be taught, especially since imperial legacies are marked by changes in student population (pp. 96-97). When Francophone education and curriculum development are preoccupied with identifications of the French language and Francophone culture and community (in the singular), how do varied youth narratives of Francophone identity honour the practicalities of everyday life experiences? And how do they bear witness to an increasingly diverse francophonie?

In this chapter, I will describe the focus group experience of exploring literary and lived experiences of my student participants. I believe it was important for the participants to have the opportunity together, at the end of the study, to "become curious" about the complex ways individual and collective responses to issues around culture, language and identity are being (re)interpreted and (re)organized, especially in *relation* to others (Sumara, Davis & van der Wey, 1998, p. 137). Reflecting critically on the collective conversation is important when considering the particular intersections of young people's lived realities, including various contexts and contradictions. Such a focus group can help me understand how young people "read the world" (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005).

While I concentrated on six participants in Chapters 8 and 9, for the purposes of this discussion I will open it up to all nine participants present during the focus group session because a focus group is a "polyvocal text" and "dialogical" process. The focus group, according to Kamerelis & Dimitriadis (2005), is polyvocal because it recognizes the complexity of participants' social locations and, in turn, the need for many voices. Allowing a cross-section of Francophone youth to connect with each other as a collective creates a space for listening to different interpretations of the same book or similar experiences. The focus group is also dialogical, offering "unique insights" into collective inquiry by opening up dialogue about students' everyday experiences and reflecting on their "real-world" concerns. As I learned, facilitating a focus group gets messy, and the messiness of words and voices overlapping does not bode well for concentrating only on the responses of six students. As the collective conversation unfolded, students built on the ideas of one another and attempting to separate muddled meanings in this participatory and polyvocal exercise would not necessarily be fruitful. Reflecting upon and analyzing the responses of a multifaceted nine-person group interview will contribute to a much richer, more complex, and even contradictory account of their thinking as I work towards an analysis of storytelling and how it shapes curriculum.

Engaging in personal and collective responses to text

a) Introducing the commonplace text: *La Chasse-galerie*

On July 19, 2006, the first day of our collective literary anthropology project, I distributed copies of Roch Carrier's (2004) *La Chasse-galerie* to a group of six junior high school students.[62] I gave the group of four boys and two girls about ten minutes to discover the book on their own, prior to my reading aloud the story. Some of the comments they made amongst themselves pertained to the supernatural, the colourful and the historical. As they perused the colourful pages of their picture book, students had difficulty establishing the timeline of the story, mainly confused by three dates: *Bonne Année 1947*, *le Petit Almanach 1847*, and the current year of 2006. When was the story taking place and who was telling it? The students were eager to know the story of *La Chasse-galerie*.

I read the story dramatically, beginning slowly and my voice going up to invite the readers and listeners of this fantastical tale:

> *Vous ne croyez pas qu'un canot d'écorce puisse s'envoler ? ...Comme disait ma grand-mère : cric, crac, croc, les enfants. Parli, parlo, parlan. Écoutabi, écoutaban ! ...Voici mon histoire.*

---

[62] While the ten participants had good intentions of attending all three 'meeting' days, family plans during July and August affected the attendance of various participants. Overall, four girls were absent on the first day, another girl on the last day, but all ten were present on the 'teaching' day when I juxtaposed the picture book with other cultural literary texts.

The words "*C'était au commencement du Canada*," "*Puis ce fut la veille du Nouvel An*," and "*Dans la forêt de l'Outaouais, on se sentait bien loin de la Beauce*" situated the readers in time and place. When I finished reading the lyrical text, I looked up at my students' perplexed faces. Like so often when I had read aloud in class, the students' thinking was confused but the students had grown accustomed to questioning how and what I had read. As for *La Chasse-galerie*, they were bewildered in the magical maze of lyrical voices, bold colours, imposing words, impressive pictures, and historical moments – a colourful and somewhat superstitious tale. Their comments ranged from the humourous "*Je pense qu'ils ont pris plus qu'un verre*" to the supernatural "*C'est un canot spécial*" to the pensive "*Pourquoi ça s'appelle La Chasse-galerie? Il n'y a rien sur la chasse ou la galerie.*"

I asked the group if they knew the origins of *La Chasse-galerie*, the story and the name. No one did. I explained that I had studied the legend at their age, as a 13-year-old student at a Francophone Catholic school in Ontario, to which they remarked that was "cool." I did not elaborate on why *La Chasse-galerie* was considered a French Canadian classic within my Grade 8 French anthology. Nor did I mention that this history was that of my maternal grandfather and, to a lesser degree, my own. In retrospect, perhaps I should have. On the one hand, this book is representative of my curriculum life as well as the curriculum lives of my teaching colleagues (who are predominantly unilingual, Catholic, White Québécois Francophones). On the other, such French Canadian stories continue to be taught as 'classics' rather than as "an effort to form [French] Canada"

(Willinsky, 2006, p. 100). Later on in this chapter, I will re-consider how my choice of text, *La Chasse-galerie*, is both 'homework' and the work of the nation.

b) (Re)marking their commonplace text

During the first meeting of the literary anthropology study, I read the picture book aloud to the six out of ten participants who attended, and invited them to take notes in their own copy of the commonplace text (Sumara, 2002). For example, they could mark interesting words and passages, favourite quotes, and their feelings, general impressions, and reactions to the characters and events. For the research method to be successful, according to Sumara (2002), the reader must be able to mark and remark the text that is being read. Here are some of the ways I encouraged participants to do the textual annotations in their copy of the commonplace text:

- showed a clip from the film *The English Patient* re: the patient's commonplace book to illustrate what this book could look like;[63]
- showed students a copy of a novel I have read and reread, marked and remarked;
- gave examples of ways to mark the text, providing two handouts to guide them;[64]
- read aloud the entire picture book to the group;
- provided each student with a complimentary copy of *La Chasse-galerie*;
- gave time for participants to write in their commonplace book;

---

[63] The *commonplace book* idea is that of Canadian author Michael Ondaatje, who wrote the international bestselling novel, *The English Patient*. Readers get to know the identity of the English patient through his re-reading and re-marking of his commonplace book, *The Histories* of Herodotus. In the clip shown to the participants, we see a thick and well-worn copy of *The Histories*, in which the English patient had written quotations, sketched drawings, and glued cards and souvenirs.

[64] I provided them with two handouts: *Aide-mémoire « My Commonplace Book » : Comment faire?* and *Expressions ou mots-clés intéressants tirés du livre.*

- suggested writing entries in a small response journal that could be glued onto the inside or back covers of their book;
- gave them some school supplies, such as Post-It notes, coloured pens, highlighters, index cards, stickers, glue stick, and small response journal.

I also invited them to continue with the textual annotations at home, until the end of the study.[65]

Initial reactions to the textual annotations 'assignment' were positive. When I asked the students to reiterate what was expected, they all used the word "scrapbook." Almost in unison, and saying the word slash in between each term, the participants collectively defined a commonplace book as follows: "c'est comme un collage / diary / journal / life story / scrapbook." Following the introduction of what a commonplace book entailed, I distributed a kit to each student containing the picture book and school supplies. Students immediately commented the book's bold colours and beautiful pictures. The discussion turned interesting when students debated when the story was being told and who was telling it. This indicated to me that, in trying to establish a timeline, students were already analyzing the story. However, I would be the most surprised to learn that none of the participants had ever heard of *La Chasse-galerie*!

I would somewhat disagree with Sumara (2002), however, in that my student participants could truly appreciate how note-taking (especially) and rereading "help to foreground the way that language continues to interact with memory in the ongoing development of human identities" (p. 241). I think being in a formal classroom setting, working day-to-day on the markings of a commonplace text, and providing guidance by giving more and/or different prompts depending on student feedback, would have helped in setting the tone for a literary anthropology study over a prolonged period of time. At the same time, I firmly believe my student participants represent a regular classroom in that some activities work better than others, how theory and practice do not always meet in the ways intended, and how junior high students are always direct in their responses. Upon collecting their minimally annotated books, for example, I asked my Grade 7 participants if they had understood what the commonplace book project entailed, and they all agreed that they had, remarking that they "just didn't do it." My participants did not re-mark their commonplace text to the extent as outlined by Sumara (2002) and Sumara, Davis & van der Wey (1998), or at least my understanding of the extensive remarking expected. However, I believe that my students still met the text in different ways as discussed during the focus group interview at the end of the study. Developing student thinking during initial one-on-one interviews and then within a focus group environment still supports the interpretive and collaborative inquiry process that is literary anthropology.

---

[65] As their 'former teacher,' I was drawn to 'teach' and guide them in completing this research 'assignment.' As a researcher, I was cognizant of encouraging them through this process, rather than imposing assignment dates on them. However, I couldn't help but feel the lines between teacher and researcher were blurred because of the previously established student-teacher relationship. Accordingly, I did not insist on attendance or completion of textual connotations, although I did wish I had some authority in these matters. Still, I was pleased with the overall outcome of our discussions as well as with the relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere of our three meetings, which took place in July and August.

Re-visiting the choice of *La Chasse-galerie* as a commonplace text

I believe that Roch Carrier's (2004) picture book, *La Chasse-galerie* (and translated in English as *The Flying Canoe*), created a commonplace for young Albertans to engage in personal and collective responses to text and to ideas of identity.

Admittedly, when I came across the 2004 edition of *La Chasse-Galerie*, a book of my childhood, feelings and imaginings associated with a time and a place and people (deceased and dying family members) conveyed a sense of home. For Nussbaum (1995), the literary imagination, in its commitment to the emotions, should render visible "what sort of feeling and imagining is enacted in the telling of the story itself, in the shape and texture of the sentences, the pattern of the narrative, the sense of life it animates the text as a whole" (p. 4). Indeed, in seeing the book, I recalled the voices of my *pépère* and both of my *mémères* (all three French Canadian), of the numerous family gatherings of laughter and French Canadian song, of someone playing the piano or the fiddle, and of my Grade 8 class enthralled by the fantastical tale of *La Chasse-galerie*, a tale of our ancestors.

While *La Chasse-galerie* is part of the fabric of 'French Canada', I have also learned as a teacher that this French Canadian mythology was defined for me (as well as for other students in Canada). This and other similar tales continue to be used to portray the differences in cultural traditions of French Canadian families. For example, in encouraging the use of children's literature in Canadian social studies classrooms, Gibson (2005) recommends *The Sugaring Off Party* by Jonathan London "to allow children to explore different social and cultural issues within our society" (p. 52), while suggesting Roch Carrier's *The Hockey Sweater*, "a story of a boy who faces discrimination of the colour of his hockey sweater" to "develop empathy, understanding and attitudes of caring and concern" (p. 51). It is, therefore, precisely for this purpose too that I have chosen *La Chasse-galerie*, a popular tale that makes me wonder, as a teacher and a Francophone of French Canadian heritage, what is influential (still) about these popularized conceptions and perceptions of Francophones in Canada. Aware that I was taught to believe in this national myth, I wondered if my participants of diverse backgrounds, who all attend the same Francophone Catholic school, would also embrace this story – and why or why not. Francis (1997), in his book *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History*, invites Canadians to re-examine the ways we think about Canada in general and its myths in particular, because national identity and civic ideology are constructed, "continually recreated and reinforced" by different versions of or major myths in Canadian history.

At first glance, *La Chasse-galerie* may not seem an appropriate choice for a Grade 7 classroom with a diverse linguistic student body because it portrays a historical narrative of French Canadians. While the interpretation of *La Chasse-galerie* is not the issue, as outlined in literary anthropology method, what matters is two-fold: narrative and counter-narrative. On the one hand, popular stories like *La Chasse-galerie* reflect, for most Canadians and *Canadiens* (refering here to the inhabitants of Canada, descendants of French settlers), the dominant narrative of French Canada and, ultimately, for Francophones in Canada. My choice of *La Chasse-galerie* is to contemplate – and complicate – if French-speaking Albertans have 'overlooked' the changing reality of the Albertan and Canadian francophonies. How will my student participants respond, individually and collectively, to such a mythical text? And how will their responses convey a deeper sense of the layered nature of Francophone experience, historically and currently, on Alberta soil? How can curriculum stories such as *La Chasse-galerie* – and Carrier's (2004) retelling of it – be interrogated? If national identities are historical constructions and communal imaginaries (Anderson, 1991), then what happens when a heterogeneous Francophone community grows and curriculum texts call for a continual reimagination of Francophone 'national' identity? Given Alberta's local and global contexts, how can young Francophones help us better understand how identity narratives are re-negotiated (and re-produced)? How can my plea for a comprehensive vision of Canada's Francophone communities be heard?

Exploring through collective conversation: The focus group experience

The goal of the one-hour focus group was to explore, face-to-face, the lived experiences of young Francophones in Alberta and their interpretations of these as well as the commonplace text, *La Chasse-galerie*.[66] I attempted to facilitate this collective discussion and reflection on the multifaceted and interrelated interpretations of history, memory, language, culture, geography and identity; however, as the conversation unfolded, my subject positions changed. I will briefly describe the focus group experience as a facilitator, teacher-researcher and group member because my roles overlapped and because such a multilevel reflection will help better understand our collective effort in articulating a 'Franco-Albertan' identity in an increasingly plural Francophone world.

a) Thinking of *La Chasse-galerie* as folklore or 'fakelore'?

Inviting all students to take part in a focus group was practical and methodological because literary anthropology practices emphasize the importance of students and teachers engaging together in personal and collective responses to texts, of sharing their own lived experiences, and of discussing new ways of thinking about the relationships among learning, teaching and knowing (Laidlaw, 2004; Sumara, 2002;

---

[66] The focus group discussion took place on August 2, 2006. Nine out of ten participants were present.

Sumara, Davis & van der Wey, 1998). Drawing upon the suggestions of Kamberelis & Dimitriadis (2005) on conducting focus groups, I began by having each participant say their pseudonym and mention their favourite movie and a personal quality, to get over the initial awkwardness of being all together and speaking publicly (and into one of three tape recorders). Then, I moved the discussion on talking about what each participant thought of *La Chasse-galerie* story. Léonie jumped in to announce that she did not like the story. Overall, the participants could not "relate to" the story, and immediately questioned its authenticity.

> Léonie: *Moi, je ne l'ai pas aimée. Parce que j'ai pas compris. Bien, j'ai compris que c'était dans le temps quand le Canada a commencé, mais après il parle d'un canot qui va dans le ciel puis tout puis, I don't know, c'est bizarre. Ce n'est pas le genre d'histoire que moi j'aime.*
>
> Édouard[67]: *Je trouve que l'histoire est un peu bizarre parce que l'histoire n'est plus l'original. Ça reflète comment ils l'ont refait.*

I was not prepared for the conversation to *start* by questioning the *re*-telling of *La Chasse-galerie*, that is, Roch Carrier's version! But Édouard had picked up on this fact: first, by reading the author's comment in the back of the picture book (which I had not yet pointed out during our three collective read-alouds)[68] and, second, by asking his mother (originally from Québec), between our readings and meetings, about how she had learned the story of *La Chasse-galerie*. Édouard considers that maybe the story was retold for children; still, he didn't like the fact that it was retold in the first place, which is bizarre" in itself. As for Karen, she finds the story "fake" while Rose, the only student who likes legends, agrees that she prefers 'realistic' stories.

---

[67] In addition to the six, three other participants' responses (Édouard, Rose and Lucas) are included in this chapter on the focus group interview.

[68] "Un Mot de l'auteur" ends with "Voici ma version de cette histoire intemporelle" (Carrier, 2004, n.p.). Also, the front cover clearly states that *La Chasse-galerie* is "retold by Roch Carrier" – "raconté de nouveau par Roch Carrier."

> Karen: *Moi, je n'aime pas les histoires qui sont fake.*
>
> Rose: *Moi, j'ai aimé apprendre une nouvelle légende à cause que, bien, j'aime les légendes. Je sais pas pourquoi, mais ya. Puis c'est peut-être pas le genre de livre que je lirais d'habitude. Comme d'habitude, je lis des histoires réalistes comme Karen, mais des livres que je peux, I can relate to.*

Well, it is fake, so to speak. My Francophone self steered me to analyze this interpretation prematurely; however, my teacher-researcher self reminded me why I was holding a focus group: to have the participants respond (rather than me) and to explain "why" rather than "what" (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2005). In any case, Karen's use of the word "fake" stopped me cold in my tracks and seven out of the nine students agreed that they could not "relate to" the story because it wasn't real. Does that mean that this popular tale of folklore was now considered fakelore?

La Chasse-galerie is fiction, a legend of French Canadian cultural significance and resonance, the invention of a cultural moment that continues to influence the categories of Francophone identity, culture and community. I don't think we should disregard this historical legend, or the "fact" of the historical French Canadian nation as White, Catholic, homogeneous, French-speaking labourers committed to family, faith and nation. Rather, taunted by Léonie's dislike of what happened then (i.e. history) and by Karen's distrust of "fake" stories, I think we should ask *why* this story is needed and who needs it. Although I used a historical narrative, its significance (or not) lies in the present (as reiterated by Léonie). What's difficult about the present? How are we interpreting it, through the eyes of a traditional past or with an eye towards a diasporic future?

Léonie: *Bien, pour moi, j'aime des choses qui sont en ce temps, right, ici. Puis, I don't know. Je n'ai vraiment jamais compris des choses qui étaient du vieux temps, comme en 1847. Ça ne m'intéresse pas. Alors, je ne me suis pas concentrée sur ça.*

On what would Léonie and her peers concentrate as they attempted to make sense of their lives as Alberta Francophones?

b) "Relating to" and beyond French Canadian perspectives?

The discussion moved to not being able to relate to the story, perhaps because it was neither current nor relevant and perhaps, too, because it was deceiving. Yet, two participants, of Québécois heritage, said they were able to understand it.

Jean-Michel: *Bien, c'est que mon père vient du Québec. Il vient de Montréal. Puis il a déjà entendu cette histoire-là et sa version est un peu différente. Il ne fallait pas que le canot touche les clochers puis c'était le diable qui leur avait dit ça ou quelque chose. Je peux comprendre l'histoire.*

Brian: *Well, en plus, l'histoire pour moi est reliée à mes parents et à moi parce que mes parents viennent de* [cette région]. *L'histoire me fait penser aux partys là-bas, quand les personnes ont vu le canot et que les gens dansaient et faisaient le rigodon puis tout.*

Brian recalls his festive family holidays spent over Christmas and New Year's, and upon his use of the word *rigodon*, I asked the group if they knew the term. Some referred to large family gatherings, grandfathers in Québec who play the violon, and female selves or siblings who have learned to dance the traditional French Canadian *gigue*. Léonie, Karen and Rania recall that dancing, or learning to dance, is a family tradition.

Léonie: *Moi, je fais la gigue, right, depuis que j'ai 7 ans, je pense. Puis ma mère l'a fait puis ma grand-mère l'a fait. Ça va dans leur famille. Avant, quand j'étais vraiment petite, on faisait le rigodon chez nous.*

Karen: *J'ai appris la danse rwandaise de mes parents, de mes cousins et de mes tantes.* [Je ne danse] *pas maintenant. On a arrêté un peu.*

Rania: *Les danses libanaises, c'est comme avec ma famille, mes cousins au Liban puis tout ça. Puis aux mariages* [des membres de ma famille].

The topic of family gatherings and dancing became a shared point of discussion, whether a student was *Franco-Albertaine de souche*, that is French Canadian in origin, or was of the new emergent francophonie. While Jean-Michel and Brian could appreciate the story, the others still could not, thus putting into question its relevance and poignancy as a 'classic'.

Jean-Michel was the second participant to question the 'version' of the story, as it was different to that learned by their parents, and this lead to the group wondering whose story it was. At this point in the focus group the discussion, of whether or not *La Chasse-galerie* was *une histoire québécoise*, took a turn, and facilitating the discussion became a challenge. By this point in the collective conversation, my teacher(-researcher) authority had completely waned. As each point surfaced, I tried to go around the room and invite each participant to speak to their respective standpoints and lived realities. However, as many of my junior high students grew excited and jumped into the conversation whenever and however they wanted, I had difficulty opening up the space and inviting everyone to share, notably the more soft-spoken female participants (Karen, Sophie, and Rania). Kamberelis & Dimitriadis (2005) suggest that focus groups "decenter the authority of the researcher, providing [students] with safe spaces to talk about their own lives and struggles" (p. 893). But was it "safe" for everyone to speak? Did the focus group "decenter" the authority of the French Canadian perspective? Was it a conversation that acknowledged a more nuanced reflection on the interconnectedness of the francophonie, as lived and perceived by youth?

(Dis)Placing stories and identities: "The Québec-Alberta story"

Of the nine participants present for the focus group, seven identified *La Chasse-galerie* as *une histoire québécoise* rather than as a French Canadian one. In general, the participants could not relate to the story, and for Lucas, this meant being disconnected from Québec because he has no family ties there. However, for Karen, she sees the story not as unique to Québec, although it is set there.

> Lucas: *Je ne suis pas connecté au Québec, vraiment. Comme je n'ai pas de parenté là, sauf ma tante qui est née au Nouveau-Brunswick, mais elle a déménagé au Québec. Je n'ai pas de parenté québécoise ou rien. Je suis allé au Québec une fois.*
>
> Laura: *Donc, tu vois ça plus comme une histoire québécoise.*
>
> Lucas: *Ya.*
>
> Karen: *Pas vraiment. Bien, c'est juste une histoire. C'est juste parce que c'est au Québec.*
>
> Laura: *Ça se passe au Québec. Moi, je ne suis pas Québécoise non plus, mais en Ontario, quand j'avais votre âge, on a étudié cette histoire comme si elle était notre histoire. Puis pourtant on n'est pas Québécois.*
>
> Rose: *C'est comme l'histoire du Hockey Sweater. Ça, c'est comme notre histoire.*
>
> Laura: *Explique cela, notre histoire. C'est à qui l'histoire The Hockey Sweater?*
>
> Rose: *C'est au Canada, genre, à cause qu'on aime tous le hockey.*

The story of *La Chasse-galerie* is of an older generation, that of my grandparents and that of French Canadians. And so it is not surprising that 12- and 13-year-olds cannot relate to it. However, because 'French Canadian' does not seem to be in their consciousness, they deduct that the story must come from Québec. After all, that is the centre of 'French Canada'. Rose seems to prefers *The Hockey Sweater* (also by Roch Carrier) because it has universal appeal. This beloved story is Canada's story because, in Rose's mind, it can speak for all of Canada no matter where you are, because hockey is more universal (than a flying canoe). This speaks to Canada as a hockey-crazed country and also to stories of childhood (e.g. parents making you wear something you don't like). Karen, who had previously mentioned in an individual interview that basketball was her sport, also recognizes that hockey is king in Alberta. Therefore, it is not surprising that *The Hockey Sweater* would be described as "notre histoire", here in Alberta.

a) Narrating 'national' stories

Following Rose's connection of *La Chasse-galerie* and *The Hockey Sweater*, the group wondered if both stories were *québécoises*. After all, both are set in Québec. Lucas, however, prefers *The Hockey Sweater* because it is more contemporary.

> Lucas: *The Hockey Sweater, c'est plus une histoire canadienne et, oui, ça vient du Québec. Mais c'est devenu une histoire connue et canadienne. Comme The Hockey Sweater, je l'aime mieux que La Chasse-galerie whatever.*
>
> Laura: *Pourquoi tu dis que tu la préfères?*
>
> Lucas: *C'est contemporain.*

Although set in the 1940s, *The Hockey Sweater* is a modern story compared to *La Chasse-galerie*'s folkloric setting of the 19th century. At the same time, Roch Carrier's picture book *Le Chandail* was adapted into an incredibly popular National Film Board animated short film (1980) by the same name, which all the students had seen at school.

Léonie agreed with Lucas regarding the contemporary nature of *The Hockey Sweater*, adding that *La Chasse-galerie* belongs to Québec and Québec culture.

> Léonie: *C'est que je pense que l'histoire ferait plus de sens à des personnes qui viennent du Québec parce que c'est leur culture. Alors, je pense qu'ils vont la comprendre plus. Mais les personnes qui viennent d'ici en Alberta, je ne pense pas qu'elles vont la comprendre vraiment parce que beaucoup d'entre nous, on est Albertains et on ne vient pas du Québec.*
>
> Lucas: *On a plus une culture albertaine que québécoise. Qui vient du Québec et connaît l'Alberta?*

For Léonie, Francophones in Alberta are from Alberta originally rather than from Québec while, for Lucas, Francophones in Alberta would therefore have a distinctly Albertan culture rather than a Québec one. Lucas also wondered what knowledge the Québécois have of Alberta. Following Léonie's and Lucas' responses, I asked the group to envision an Alberta story.

b) Re-narrating the nation: A Franco-Albertan perspective?

What story did they see coming from here? What are Franco-Albertan stories? The participants agreed that the place names would change (e.g. cities and rivers), as would the landscape to include the mountains and the prairies. For Jean-Michel, the story could be adapted to Alberta and its resource-based economy, namely the oil sands.

> Jean-Michel: *Ça serait des gens qui travailleraient dans les sables bitumineux... et puis qui prendraient un avion pour aller à Falher ou je ne sais pas là, aller où eux autres vivent, où ils ont de la famille.*
>
> Lucas : *À Fort Mac.*
>
> Jean-Michel: *Dans les sables bitumineux à Fort McMurray, où ils travaillent le pétrole. Ça serait travailler du pétrole au lieu de couper du bois.*
>
> Lucas: *Des rig pigs qui prennent un avion...*

Everyone is laughing at Jean-Michel's suggestion, as well as at Lucas' wording. Everyone is speaking simultaneously, sharing comments amongst themselves. I had lost complete control, as teacher and facilitator. Although I had prepared interview prompts, the dialogic relationship emerged as more important and so my interview questions floated away.

When prodded, my participants could see how the story of *La Chasse-galerie* could be universal and adapted to Alberta. Still, they identified it with Québec. In my mind, this represents a chain from the past, a French Canadian story that appeals/appealed to 'French Canadians' across Canada, like when I was in Grade 8. However, my participants – who do not define themselves as French Canadians – no longer see this story as French Canadian, but rather Québécois. This not only represents a shift, but also further fragmentation because they articulate their identity and culture as Franco-Albertan rather than French Canadian or Franco-Canadian.

What did surprise me about the Franco-Albertan rendition of *La Chasse-galerie* was Brian's comment around the necessity of including English place names and English text.

> Brian: *Plus comme anglophone* [...le texte] *ça serait plus en anglais que lui* [tel que raconté par Roch Carrier].
>
> Rose: *Ça serait probablement une histoire plus anglophone à cause que nous, on a beaucoup d'anglophones ici. Si on compare la population francophone à celle des anglophones.*

I find Brian's and Rose's comment interesting because, in my mind, a Franco-Albertan version would not necessarily have to include English text. Still, Brian and Rose seem to be saying that Alberta is an Anglophone place and that you cannot live completely in French here. In other words, if the Franco-Albertan version of the story would have

English in it, then it is because their personal story – at once individual and collective – has English in it.

One final student suggestion was changing the folkloric French Canadian songs in *La Chasse-galerie*, for example, "*C'est l'aviron qui nous mène en haut*" because, according to Rose, "*il n'y a pas grand monde qui connaît cette chanson-là.*" Karen still thought that a Franco-Albertan version would include a French Canadian song, "*mais plus connue*." When I asked the group to name "*une chanson franco-albertaine,*" they named popular contemporary folk songs from Québec.

> Laura: *Donc, vous me dites encore que l'histoire franco-albertaine aurait une chanson québécoise.*
>
> Jean-Michel: *Bien, on n'a pas vraiment de chansons d'ici.*
>
> Laura : *Jean-Michel pense qu'on n'a pas vraiment de chansons d'ici, comme francophones.*
>
> Lucas: *La plupart des francophones ici viennent du Québec ou du Nouveau-Brunswick.*
>
> Jean-Michel: *Oui.*
>
> Lucas: *So, ça ne serait pas vraiment différent.*

The inclusion of contemporary Québécois songs renders the naming of a Franco-Albertan story complex because it is being displaced. On the one hand, Jean-Michel does not seem to recognize authentic Franco-Albertan songs from here, which may speak to where (popular) French music is being made today in Canada – Québec. On the other hand, Lucas's comment speaks to the origins of Franco-Albertans: they are white French-speaking settles with similar French roots. In other words, Franco-Canadian national identity is rooted in French Canadian identity. At this point in the conversation, Rania pipes up to disagree.

Lucas:	*Deep roots, ça vient tout du Québec, anyway. Ça vient tout de l'est* [du Canada] *et non de l'ouest.*
Jean-Michel:	*Moi, je viens d'ici* [de l'Alberta], *mais mes parents viennent de l'est.*
Rania:	*Pas moi.*
Rose:	*Ça serait plus la France à cause qu'il y avait la France avant.*
Lucas:	*Mais ils sont venus de la France et ils ont colonisé le Québec. Puis là ils ont commencé à faire leur migration vers l'ouest.*
Jean-Michel:	*La France puis le Québec, c'est bien différent.*

Rania, who was born and raised in Alberta, doesn't see herself as from here. Her origins are from Lebanon, the homeland of her parents. What is interesting about the responses of Rose, Lucas and Jean-Michel is that they recognize France. They know that the French language and settlers came from France. However, in their experience, the French centre remains Québec because it plays a much larger role than France. Perhaps it is time to re-consider the origins of Francophones here in Alberta and throughout the world, and why they are – rather than what.

c) "Deep roots": Providing a present sense to the Francophone past

Drawing on my teaching experience in Francophone and French Immersion schools in Western Canada, I find that students and teachers are particularly interested in *what* the Francophone world is (e.g. naming the countries of the world francophonie and identifying their flags). Instead, they (myself included) should be interested on *why* this Francophone world exists and why it persists. Willinsky (2006) suggests that secondary school students are ready to learn about the legacy of European imperialism in their lives and that teachers are the ones who need to play catch up (p. 95). In the Franco-Canadian context, as the responses illustrate below, this means teaching young people about the age of empires – French-speaking and English-speaking – and the organized religions that came with empire.

Laura:	*Est-ce qu'on aurait tous un pays en commun ?*
Jean-Michel:	*Le Canada.*
Sophie:	*Le monde.*
Jean-Michel:	*Le Vatican.*
Laura:	*Si j'ai bien compris, Sophie, tu as dit le monde. On a ça en commun. Est-ce que j'ai bien compris ?*
Sophie:	*Oui.*
Laura:	*Oui. Pourquoi tu dis le monde?*
Sophie:	*Bien, on vit dans le monde.*

Practising postcolonial theory in the Francophone high school classroom means teaching the young about imperial legacies as present rather than past. It means teaching them that the raison d'être of the Francophone school is to produce 'good' Francophone citizens. Case in point: at a Western Canadian conference held in Winnipeg in May, 2007, Lucie Gauvin of the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education asked if "l'école peut-elle arriver à transmettre cette notion 'qu'être francophone est un acte de citoyenneté'? Allons-nous assez loin et comment permettons-nous aux jeunes de donner du sens au fait d'être francophone?" (Lanthier, 2007, p. 7).

In Ontario, the Ministry of Education (2005) created the language-planning policy *Aménagement linguistique*, for the province's French-language schools and Francophone community, to support schools in "better fulfilling" their mission in "educat[ing] young Francophones to become competent and responsible citizens, empowered by their linguistic and cultural identity" (n.p.). In Alberta as well, questions of Francophone citizenship is not housed in social studies alone; instead, it permeates the Francophone school's educational project. Central to Alberta Learning's (2001) Framework for French first language education is Francophone students' ability "to know how to affirm oneself and act positively as a Francophone citizen" (p. 17). While the French language is central to being, knowing and acting as 'good' Francophone citizens in both Ontario and Alberta, making room for why this pedagogical project exists needs to be taught to young people because the age of empire as past is simply misleading (Willinsky, 2006, p. 96, p. 98). As Willinsky explains,

> If the imperial legacy lives on in the curriculum of today, then the ways in which it lives on – at the core of the educational experience – needs to be part of what students and teachers explore and learn about, rather than ignore and pretend was never there (p. 97).

If young Francophones are citizens of the world – "*Bien, on vit dans le monde*" – then it is crucial that they practise postcolonial theory, that curriculum and curriculum workers provide a present sense to the past. For the Francophone school is a vital part of building a Francophone Canada and world, from France and Québec to cities of Ontario and Alberta. I believe that students and teachers should explore and learn about *why* the far-flung reaches of French and Belgian empires are here and *why* these French-speaking legacies live on in the contemporary curriculum lives of Alberta Francophones.

Teaching pedagogical history: Where are Francophones from?

As previously mentioned, the Francophone school curriculum narrates a particular story of the Francophone community, with its traditional narratives of the French Canadian past and with its inclusion and exclusion of certain people and their stories.

However, as Willinsky (1998, 2006) and Norquay (2000) remind me, curricular relations are always nestled within a complex context of who we are (becoming) and where we are, and this means helping young people better understand "who belongs where" in a world of profound divisions. For Norquay, answering the Canadian identity question "Where is here?" is not sufficient; rather, posing an additional question such as "Where are you from?" is essential to problematize 'country of origin' and challenge assumptions and dominant understandings of who is Canadian. And when I consider the vast political and social spaces that Francophones occupy across Canada and the world, it becomes crucial to reconsider how students make sense of who Francophones are and where they are from.

When I asked the focus group participants to share their understanding of who is Francophone, the discussion surprisingly did not focus around language per se, but rather about Francophone roots and the difference between being French and speaking French.

Jean-Michel: *Bien, des francophones, ce sont des gens qui parlent français puis qui font partie de cette culture, mais qui ne vivent pas nécessairement en France. Il y a beaucoup de gens qui pensent ça.*

Rose: *Moi, ce qui me vient en tête, c'est mon école puis ce que Jean-Michel a dit. On ne vit pas et il y a plein de gens qui ne vivent pas en France et qui parlent le français puis ya. On a une culture un peu différente de celle de la France, bien sûr. D'une façon ou d'une autre, ça revient au même à un moment donné.*

Laura: *Qu'est-ce qui est la même chose?*

Rose: *On parle le français puis avant que le Québec est devenu une province, il y avait la France qui l'avait colonisé. So, d'une façon ou d'une autre, nos racines sont vraiment de la France.*

Léonie: *Être francophone, c'est de comprendre puis de parler français, de vivre dans une communauté francophone, puis d'être fier d'être francophone n'importe où.*

Jean-Michel: *Moi, je suis d'accord avec Édouard qu'on n'a pas besoin de vivre dans un pays francophone pour être francophone. On pourrait être n'importe où dans le monde puis parler français. Puis aussi, bien, il y a beaucoup de gens qui ne comprennent pas la différence entre des Français et des francophones. Je suis allé à un camp cette semaine puis il y a un gars qui voit mon nom puis il me demande: « Are you French? ». Je lui ai répondu non, puis j'ai essayé de lui expliquer, mais il ne comprend pas. C'est que les Français, les French, ils vivent en France.* [tout le monde rit] *Les francophones, ils vivent n'importe où, mais ils parlent français. Mais les gens ne comprennent pas.*

Generally speaking, Rose views France in the past and Québec in the present, which speaks to the importance of young Francophones in a minority context learning France's (and Québec's) imperial legacy in the present moment. For Francophones outside Québec, French language rules and norms are determined in France (and to a lesser extent Québec); the heart of 'Francophone' culture is France and Québec; and the centres of the francophonie is set in both France and Québec. In our part of the world, as minority Francophones, we still look to Québec but we need to be conscious of France's role in present-day Francophone curriculum. And with the rapidly increasing pluralism in Francophone minority communities, it is vital to understand the ways imperial legacies live on because the lived experiences and perceptions of a diverse student body reflect an age of empire that endures.

a) "Moi, je suis Tutsi"

Returning briefly to the first set of one-on-one interviews, I began the same way for each participant, asking them to tell me about themselves, where they are from, where they were born, where they were raised, and so on. Karen's responses stand out because they are remarkably different from the other participants.

> *Je viens du Rwanda en Afrique à Kigali. Et...um...j'ai trois frères et deux soeurs. Mon père est mort dans le génocide au Rwanda et je vis avec ma mère. On est déménagés ici* [au Canada] *en 1998.*

It was by the end of the first interview that I mustered the courage to ask Karen about her father, about her memories of him, and about whether or not the family talks about him. Karen explained how she tends to ask her mother questions about her father, the genocide and their identity around Father's Day.

> *Ah oui, bien, ya desfois* [on va parler de mon père]. *Quand c'est Father's Day, on lui [à ma mère] demande des questions. Puis ça a tout commencé avec les Hutus et Tutsis. Elle n'aime pas parler de ça. On lui demande si on était Hutu ou Tutsi. Moi, je suis Tutsi, mais elle* [ma mère] *dit qu'on n'est pas.*

Karen's questions and her mother's reluctant answers portray how the European colonial imaginary continues to haunt a family's memory and contemporary Francophone society. If we, as Francophones, are to understand 'our' community, we must pay attention to another narrative of the past, that of European colonization because the enduring legacy of the Rwanda genocide continues, even on Alberta soil. The Belgian colonists sought the acrimonious division of ethnic groups, and so the young continue to ask unsettling questions – because they have been taught, over many generations, to divide the world in troubling ways (Willinsky, 1998). Although Karen fled Kigali at age five and has been taught to divide the 'Francophone' world between English and French, still the Belgian divisions between Hutu and Tutsi persist. In the case of Karen's mother, such versions of the world are no longer tenable. Karen's experience, however, speaks to a larger community of experiences of Francophones from other colonized locations, who have sought to understand where they are from and where they are now.

b) "Mes amies franco-africaines, je les vois"

Léonie is witnessing the expansion of her Franco-Albertan community and she attributes this largely to having Franco-African friends.

> [Avoir des amies franco-africaines], *ça élargit toute l'idée de la francophonie. Comme en études sociales, on a vu qu'il y avait beaucoup, que tous les Français étaient de peau blanche puis ils venaient du Québec. Mais quand je vois mes amies franco-africaines, je les vois, puis elles ont la peau noire puis comme elles peuvent parler d'autres langues. Elles parlent le français, l'anglais, puis whatever langue elles parlent là. Pour moi, c'est comme je sais c'est juste là puis je suis comme wow parce qu'il y a plein d'autres personnes. Il y a des personnes comme moi qui sont juste des Franco-Albertains. Il y a des personnes qui viennent de tout l'Afrique puis tout. Il y en a beaucoup de l'Asie et de la Chine, je sais pas trop quoi là, mais comme la francophonie, c'est partout dans le monde. Ça, c'est pourquoi comme ça élargit mon idée de la francophonie.*

For Léonie, then, she sees that the face of the francophonie is changing from white skin to black skin. She specifies learning in social studies that Francophone origins are rooted in Québec, but at the same time how her peers – her friends – are French-speaking Africans in origin. *Elles ont la peau noire*. They speak multiple languages, although she is not sure what they are besides French and English. Léonie knows that they are just there, that the francophonie is just there. But why are her black skinned, French-speaking friends in her Franco-Albertan high school? While Léonie's idea of the francophonie is indeed expanding, it also perpetuates a sense of difference without fully acknowledging the multiple roots (and races) of the francophonie. In this sense, postcolonial curriculum perspectives invite teachers – as "interpreters of culture", rather than transmitters and managers of knowledge (Smith, 2006, p. 255) – to be reflective about their work if they are to critically accept the educational, social and political realities of their practice. In other words, Francophone curriculum workers cannot afford to dismiss postcolonial approaches to curriculum-as-plan and as lived because the Francophone school will increasingly carry overlapping legacies of intercultural, interracial and interreligious contact. Francophone curriculum perspectives, therefore, need to be understood as "Third Space". Does this mean that teachers and students are at a turning point in the ways they explore and learn about the Francophone world here and now?

c) Reimagining Francophone curriculum as "Third Space"

Karen's and Léonie's responses address different legacies that can be positioned differently depending on histories and memories, personal and collective ones. My goal is not to compare the legacies, but to illustrate how these Alberta students are learning that (national) communities are imagined and an unfinished project (Richardson, 2006, p. 284). Postcolonial perspectives, then, allow 'the nation' to be both of these simultaneously. Drawing on Bhabha's (1990) notion of the Third Space, Richardson suggests that curriculum needs to be understood in a way

> in which cultural hybridity replaces cultural essentialism as a founding principle of the nation and in which national identity is seen to be continual and dynamic process of encounter, negotiation, and dislocation among and between cultural groups (p. 285).

If the singular nation is to be reimagined, then curriculum necessarily needs to be reconceptualized as a cultural practice (p. 284). Kanu (2006) refers to "curriculum as cultural practice" as an interpretive lens that moves culture to the centre of curriculum inquiry in order for postcolonial imaginings of the world to be translated into practice. If practice is to become central to reimagining ways of seeing and making sense of the world, then it is vital to pay attention to how culture is constructed in curriculum and interpreted, precisely because cultural (and colonial) knowledge has been privileged at the expense of historically and culturally mediated (read subjugated) knowledges and curricula. In this sense, "postcolonial becomes the site where educational/curricular assumptions and norms are called into question in the struggle for more democratic social relations" (p. 8).

From a postcolonial perspective, the Francophone school community in Alberta – preoccupied with its 'national' identity – is also called to consider multiple histories of conquest and colonization, within and beyond its borders. By highlighting the notions of colonization, cultural dislocation and competing worldviews, the Francophone school can delve into the complex world of Canada's Francophone origins, histories and challenges. Of note, the idea of a pluralist Francophone nation is not to be limited to an understanding of political and geographical borders and spaces. Rather, it must also open up the parameters of borders and spaces of seeing, naming and knowing 'Francophone' identity. And it is by reflecting on Sophie's multilayered self-identification as "Franco-Albertaine, Franco-Ontarienne and Franco-Africaine" that the construct of 'Francophone' has not only become highly problematic in its indifference (the many as one) and needs to be discussed, but mainly because 'Francophone' is already constantly negotiated (Sugars, 2002). And questions of cultural hybridity and difference can create "a more open and inclusive imaginary of the nation" as both Self and Other (Richardson, 2006, pp. 284-285). As Richardson writes, "hybridity suggests that the Third Space is a performative site where national culture is not merely reflected, but actively produced" (p. 290).

Léonie, like all students (and her teachers) in the Francophone school, need to learn where Francophones are from and how being in a postcolonial Third Space reflects and constructs difference. In this sense, postcolonial Francophone curriculum perspectives translates into understanding profound political (colonial) divisions, both past and present, because the postcolonial context calls for a reorientation of perspectives, maps, borders and spaces. Said (1978/1994), in his discourse of Orientalism, calls for the need to re-read constructions of 'East' and 'West' because they are colonial productions rendering 'the Orient' an exotic and mythical place, and because colonial discourses of representation and stereotypical modes of perception are perpetuated in the present (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002, pp. 167-169). Postcolonial curriculum perspectives recognize alternative knowledges in an attempt to contest dominant Western ways of seeing, naming and knowing the world – without privileging or recreating national discourses of representation (Kanu, 2003, 2006; Richardson, 2006) and without legitimizing nationalist discourses of identity, belonging and citizenship (McDonald, 2006). And while Léonie sees that her Francophone friends have black skin – *je les vois* – and that curriculum (namely social studies) privileges a narrative of national homogeneity, to what extent do others in the Franco-Albertan community look at Francophones and the Francophone narrative in this way? From the perspective of an emerging francophonie that is both increasingly White and Black, to what extent are Alberta 'Francophones' embracing "seemingly neutral nationalist discourses" without considering the implications of promoting a singular national identity and sense of belonging to and for Francophones and "insiders" (McDonald, 2006, p. 302)?

Given the changing circumstances of the Franco-Albertan diasporic community and of my school context with an increasingly plural group of 'Francophone' students, interpretations of where one is from, and who one is, become complex. And if the life experiences of Karen and Léonie, who interpellate 'Francophone' subject positions differently, are to help us reimagine Francophone identity, then Francophones must seek to change the way they define and perceive who is 'Francophone' and what counts as 'Francophone' narratives in a postcolonial nation such as Canada. For, Francophones in Canada need to turn to the "Third Space", one that acknowledges multiple and hybrid histories and multiple layers within histories, while also respecting the particular and plural positions, paths and places of Francophone peoples in Canada. This more expansive narrative of Francophone identities is necessarily disruptive because constructions of 'the Francophone' tell the story of two empires from a single perspective (i.e. French-English relations) and of one nation building its 'Francophone' community. And in the 'Francophone' world, this translates into the complex relationship of power and representation between dominant narratives of identity and disruptive ones.

Being Francophone in Alberta: "Real-world" concerns

Being Franco-Albertan is often misunderstood. On the one hand, Canadians do not tend to see Alberta as a French place while, on the other, defining who counts as Franco-Albertan is complicated (as my participants' narratives of identity attest). Previously, my participants did not identify themselves as French Canadian, but rather as some form of Francophone. Still, the myth of the French Canadian nation is difficult to penetrate. On the national level, and in English-language and French-language media, Francophones are portrayed as being of 'French Canadian' stock from Québec. Québec is 80% homogeneous, that is White *pure laine* Francophones. In Alberta, Francophones and their language are not recognized as being from here. In the Francophone school context, Francophone students are 'taught' to embrace a francophonie in the singular. On a curricular level, "it is increasingly widely recognized that historical understanding, if it is kept within those narrow national boundaries, will not equip the citizens of the 21st century anywhere on earth to understand their world" (Howe, 2002, p. 128). *Bref*, much work remains to be done to penetrate the French Canadian myth. How can Francophones and non-Francophones understand the interconnectedness of French-speaking peoples and cultures if we keep sticking our head in the sugar bush?

Still, the issue of identification goes to the heart of concerns with 'the nation' (Streets, 2003, p. 66). During the focus group discussion, the participants identified their own sense of Francophoneness as in opposition to the dominant Anglophone narrative. What surprised me was how vocal several of the 12- and 13-year-old participants were in speaking out against (Alberta) Anglophones' derogatory comments vis-à-vis French and Francophones. The following comments do not brush over the unpleasant aspects of being Francophone in Alberta and Canada; rather, they reflect some of their "real-world" concerns about the ways Francophones are represented and how national hierarchies between Anglophones and Francophones are maintained, that is how Anglophone knowledge and power are privileged. In their eyes, the Francophone school has a role in supporting young Francophones in displacing the power, privilege and prejudice.

a) Naming Francophones: French, Francophone, Frenchie

The discussion around representation was sparked by Jean-Michel's comment about not being "French" but "Francophone" and how Anglophones don't seem to understand the difference. Jean-Michel made the girls laugh when he contemplated asking Anglophones if they were "English", to which he said Americans would clearly say no. It is at this moment that Brian realizes that English refers to England, which can partly explain his ongoing use of the term "Anglais" when referring to Anglophone

Canadians. Of interest to me is how these young Francophones name the prejudice that they have experienced. Léonie interrupts Rania on her assessment of which of her Lebanese parents is more Francophone, based on how often they speak French. Léonie's reflection sets the following commentary in motion.

Léonie: *Bien, c'est juste un commentaire. Pour moi, quand je dis à des gens que je suis francophone, je n'aime vraiment pas ça quand ils m'appellent un Frenchie.*

Laura: *Pourquoi tu n'aimes pas ça?*

Léonie: *Parce que c'est comme...*

Édouard: *C'est raciste.*

Léonie: *Moi, je suis anglophone et je suis francophone. Puis ils m'appellent Frenchie et je n'aime pas ça. Alors, je ne peux pas juste les appeller un Anglophonian. Je ne peux pas dire ça.*

Laura: *Donc, il n'y a pas vraiment d'équivalent à Frenchie.*

Léonie: *Je ne comprends pas pourquoi les anglophones peuvent nous appeller Frenchie, mais on ne peut pas les appeller quelque chose. Ils sont juste des anglophones mais, nous, on est toujours des French, des Frenchie, des francophones.*

Brian : *Englishie.*

Léonie: *Moi, je n'aime pas ça. Ça fait pas de sens.*

Léonie shares her frustration vis-à-vis why Anglophones insist on calling her "Frenchie". She does not understand why Anglophones get to call her "Frenchie", while she cannot reciprocate the name-calling. She does not like this sense of difference because it positions her Francophone identity as inferior. Interestingly, Édouard picks up on this sense of inferiority and uses the word "raciste" to describe the derogatory comment. The group disregards Brian's attempt at calling Anglophones something, but "Englishie" does not hold water. "Frenchie" touches a cord that maintains a binary and hierarchical view of language, culture and identity in the Canadian and Franco-Albertan contexts.

b) Reappropriating 'Francophone' spaces: Student tactics

In his book *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau (1988) suggests that everyday practices are "ways of operating" or doing things and that many everyday practices are tactical in character because of power relations. Central to de Certeau's argument is that "the weak" use everyday practices (tactics, "an art of the weak") that are at once creative and adaptive in a powerful world that seeks to dominate them. Their creativity is never-ending. Can the same be said for young Francophones in Alberta who describe a world of anglonormativity?

Jean-Michel: *À mon camp, quand les gens voient mon nom, parce c'est un prénom composé, eux autres [des jeunes anglophones], ils trouvent que mon nom est pas mal gros puis ils essaient de le dire. Ça a l'air compliqué puis difficile pour eux. Puis là, ils me demandent s'ils peuvent m'appeler Frenchie.*

Laura: *Puis comment tu leur réponds?*

Jean-Michel: *Bien, non. Puis là ils veulent m'appeler l'équivalent en anglais, mais raccourci. Pour Michael, je leur dis oui parce que ce n'est pas Frenchie.*

In this instance, when Jean-Michel's name displaces him at an Alberta summer camp, he resists being called Frenchie and accepts an anglicized version of his name. While Michael seems acceptable to a fluently bilingual Franco-Albertan, it still positions him as Other, neutralizing his Francophone name and identity, to which Karen adds the word "outsider" to Jean-Michel's 'acceptance' of Michael.

Karen : *Outsider.*

Laura: *Qu'est-ce que tu viens de dire?*

Jean-Michel: *Ils sont comme racistes.*

Karen: *Outsider.*

Léonie: *Isolés de tout le monde d'autres.*

Jean-Michel: *Ils sont comme: On est anglophone; donc, on peut t'appeler Frenchie.*

Laura: *Pourquoi les anglophones ont le droit de faire ça?*

Lucas: *Ils sont racistes desfois.*

Rose: *C'est à cause que leur population est plus grande. They outnumber us. Si on voulait battre les anglophones, juste en Alberta, je pense qu'eux, ils auraient bien plus de monde que nous autres.*

Laura: *Je trouve ça intéressant. Karen, tu disais 'outsider'. Pourquoi tu penses ça?*

Karen: *Bien, si tu es le seul francophone et les autres sont anglophones, puis tu ne comprends pas même l'anglais, ils parlent et tu ne comprends rien, c'est comme automatique.*

Karen's use of the word outsider displaces Francophones as outside of dominant discourse of Alberta culture, language and identity. For Léonie, Francophones are therefore isolated and, in the words of Jean-Michel, Lucas and Édouard earlier on, the strategies used by Anglophones are deemed 'racist'. Their use of the term racism, while no longer accurate because it is not a question of race per se, points to the power and control Anglophone society (and thus Anglophones) has over a legitimate, normative identity.[69] And normative homogenizing nationalist discourses can serve to legitimize some young people as Albertans (and Canadians) and, therefore, insiders and delegitimize Alberta Francophones as other, not quite Albertan (or Canadian), thus outsiders (McDonald, 2006, p. 302). And while my students understand and speak English fluently, it is still 'automatic' that they be deemed outsiders in a place that does not recognize alternative ways of conceptualizing national identity and belonging. A singular Alberta nation conflicts with the cultural and linguistic identity of my Francophone students and, therefore, they have tactics of resistance because they lack power. Nevertheless, the fact that (young) Anglophones can exercise their power over (young) Francophones is '*tannant*' and 'annoying' for my participants.

---

[69] The Canadian novel *Two Solitudes* by Hugh MacLennan (1945) is a story of Canada's two races: the English and the French. In the novel's Foreword, MacLennan explains the necessity to emphasize that *Two Solitudes* is a story, one set in a nation with two official languages, English and French. He also points out the difficulty of naming a citizen of the country: "No single word exists, within Canada itself, to designate

> Lucas: *Le frère de mon ami, il est toujours comme: « French people are so different from English people. » Il dit toujours des choses contre les francophones qui n'ont pas rapport. Puis ça me tanne.*
>
> Rose: *It's annoying.*
>
> Laura: *Oui, bien, ça devient annoying.*
>
> Rose: *C'est annoying parce que ça arrive si souvent. Les anglophones pensent qu'ils sont vraiment supérieurs à nous.*

I was somewhat surprised how perceptive and sensitive my 12- and 13-year-old students were to the tensions of living as Francophones in Alberta (and in Canada, for that matter). This is not something, I find, that is often discussed in school; rather, playing up (instead of down) Francophone identity, culture and language – the what not the why – is continually reinforced in light of our 'minority' setting. Lucas' comment speaks to an earlier observation made by Jean-Michel, in an individual interview, saying how Anglophones "*ne nous connaissent pas vraiment*". While Lucas adds how Anglophones often call us "Frenchie or whatever", there are also some who are respectful towards

---

with satisfaction to both races a native of the country" (n.p.). In this instance, race refers to language and culture, not skin colour.

Francophones. Still, Lucas concludes that Anglophones "*sont intimidés par notre présence et notre français.*"

c) Where do Alberta Francophones belong?

Of the nine focus group participants, seven shared stories about being put down because they were Francophone. *Parce que les francophones dérangent.* The derogatory name-calling common to all was "Frenchie", including Karen. Upon saying which school she attended in southwestern Ontario, Karen, a Black African Francophone, was told: "Ya, you're a Frenchie." Does this mean that the category Francophone is language-based or does it mean that race is an imaginary category because Canadians don't name it? I believe the category of "Frenchie" is a linguistic kind of essence because language in general names and sorts objects, effectively establishing their existence in one's mind (Fuss, 1989, p. 5). While politically constructed categories such as "Frenchie" are produced and reproduced in English-language communities (provincially and nationally) as essentially different and foreign, the category is lived daily, in communities, classrooms and young curriculum lives. For example, in his six years in Alberta, Brian has never been called "Frenchie" but he has been told to go back to Québec.

Brian:	*Comme moi, comme à la place de m'appeler Frenchie ou quelque chose, à moi et ma mère, ils vont nous dire: « Go back to your country. Go back to Québec. » Comme quitter la province, juste comme ça. Vous ne venez pas d'ici.*
Laura:	*Donc, ils ne vous voient pas comme venant d'ici.*
Brian:	*Ya. Ils ne nous appellent pas des noms, mais ils nous intimident en voulant dire « Ici, c'est notre province. Vous n'avez pas le droit d'être ici. »*

Jean-Michel: *Ils nous traitent un peu comme...je pense que c'est surtout les anglophones blancs, canadiens, qui sont nés au Canada, qui sont comme « We're Canadian » puis tout. Ils disent ça. Parce que les immigrants ne feraient jamais ça parce que, eux autres, ils sont un peu comme nous. Ils sont un peu des outsiders. Il y a plus d'immigrants que de francophones, je pense.*

Laura: *Oui, de plus en plus. Mais il y a aussi des immigrants qui sont francophones.*

While students disregarded my last comment, Léonie followed with a straightforward Grade 7 conclusion: "People are dumb." This is not to target one group in particular; rather, her conclusion coupled with Jean-Michel's insights reminds English-speaking and French-speaking Albertans (and Canadians) alike that as young people struggle to make sense of their legitimate place in Alberta. As Franco-Albertans who have been territorially bounded to 'English Canada' and (Franco) Québécois have been territorially bounded to 'French Canada', it becomes important to pay more attention to the question of who needs the nation, who manufactures the 'need' for it, and whose interests it serves (Burton, 2003, p. 6). In this sense, Burton suggests that the return to empire would also entail refiguring the writing of national narratives so that national histories like those of 'Canada', 'English Canada' and 'French Canada' are rendered unstable; that is, while we can still be proud of our 'nation', unmasking the instabilities of essentialist narratives of identity and nationhood will be staged as "precarious, unmoored, and, in the end, finally unrealizable" (pp. 6-7). The challenge for Canadians and students will be to consider this possibility, that rethinking essentialist categories and stereotypes in light of multiple, hybrid identities and belongings, ultimately displacing (le) Canada. How will curriculum workers be convinced that this is a worthwhile pedagogical project?

d) What's a school to do?

In light of these students' sense of being put down, I asked them what the Francophone school should do. Except for Sophie, the students think the school should be reinforcing Francophone identity, whereas Sophie thinks it should be the family and self. As students shared some school strategies, the emphasis was on survival. Student responses generally pertained to the Francophone school preparing students how to defend themselves in a majority Anglophone society, rather than teaching exclusively intellectual pursuits.

Brian:	*Ils devraient nous apprendre comment nous défendre.*
Laura:	*Brian, pourquoi tu dis que l'école devrait vous apprendre comment vous défendre?*
Brian :	*Well, je ne sais pas. À cause qu'à l'école, c'est juste qu'ils nous apprennent des choses intelligentes ou whatever, mais ils ne nous apprennent rien comme nous combattre contre des gens qui sont mauvais avec nous. Ils sont juste là pour nous informer des choses.*

During this animated group exchange, students brainstormed strategies the school could put into place to reinforce their individual and collective Francophone identity. As suggestions were made, the group laughed (myself included). And when everyone simultaneously called out "Survivor," making reference to the popular American television show about ordinary Americans who are abandoned in an unforgiving place and who need take up challenges in order to survive, everyone was laughing out loud. They entitled the experience of their Francophone trials and tribulations as "*Survivor français*." While Léonie vehemently opposed the idea of teaching students insults in French, still I wonder if there is an element of truth behind their statements, for survival has long haunted the curriculum life of French Canadians, Franco-Albertans, Francophones, Frenchies. In reconsidering this amusing exchange, I am reminded that (young) Alberta Francophones will make do, not only because there are countless ways of 'making do', but because individuals are constantly developing strategies and tactics to deal with the constraining order of everyday life (de Certeau, 1988, pp. 29-31). In this sense, young Francophones will continue with their tactics of resistance, unsettling the nationalist discourses of identity and belonging and fragmenting the place called Alberta in order to reclaim a sense of autonomy and legitimacy as Francophones. Will these young Francophones survive? The game is simple: Outwit, Outplay, Outlast. Who will survive this game of adaptation?

Re-searching Francophone identity: Towards a more pluralistic vision of Francophone curriculum perspectives

For the purpose of the focus group interview, I chose to begin discussing *La Chasse-galerie* in order to engage students in their personal stories of Francophone lived experiences in Alberta. Stories told from memory and fiction (fake) stories both concern everyday tactics, and participants shared their perceptions of the tensions between Anglophones and Francophones, lending a political dimension to their everyday practices. Preoccupied by the Anglophone-Francophone binary, where Anglophone is always dominant, the students illustrate how these binary structures continue to exist, perpetuating a relation of dominance between Anglophones and 'Frenchies'. More importantly, they continue to raise questions about authenticity and resistance, especially when cultural and linguistic positions and practices do not fit the binary 'logic' (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002b, p. 24). For example, all of my participants speak English fluently, disrupting the binary opposite (although curriculum documents state that

Francophone students should be bilingual). Another example, Karen, a Black African Francophone, is called a Frenchie, which troubles the claims of an essentialized White French-Canadian model of identity and culture. And a postcolonial Francophone identity is emerging in constructed yet ambivalent spaces such as 'Alberta', 'Francophone school' and 'Canada': Rania does not consider herself Francophone, while Sophie sees herself as having a multifaceted Francophone identity at once Ontarienne, Albertaine and Africaine. Therefore, in order to locate the complexities and ambiguities between binary opposites within a structure of power relations, it is vital to complicate categories, overlapping cultures, spaces and realities. In this sense, claims of 'Francophone' identity and culture to possess a fixed, pure and homogeneous body of values, are exposed as historically constructed, and thus corrigible formations (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2002b, p. 37).

The dilemma of the Francophone schooling and curriculum (preoccupied with cultural and linguistic survival, along with community vitality and renewal), therefore, becomes how to place language, culture and identity at the centre of curriculum and build Francophone curriculum perspectives that include and interpret new responses to ways of knowing, teaching and learning the francophonies and Francophone identities. As Kanu (2003) posits, the purpose of curriculum reform in an era of globalization and hybridization is not to pit privileged Western culture against the marginalized cultures of the non-west. Rather, it should be "founded on the principle of the heterogeneous basis of all knowledge and the need to find abiding links that connect groups across ethnic affiliations, geographical origins, and locations" (p. 78).

By framing a discussion of Francophone curriculum perspectives within postcolonialism, a diasporic, hybrid postcolonial (Albertan) francophonie will be better explained, if not explained differently. It is not sufficient to turn the francophonie upside down; rather, it is crucial to trouble the francophonie as a (politically) socially and linguistically constructed space. In doing so, I am suggesting a curriculum practice of cultural ambiguity, hybridity and plurality, connecting the experiences, histories, memories and places of the margins and the mainstream, of various centres and peripheries, of different heres and theres. All in this paradoxal inbetween place we call (l')Alberta. The challenge of overlapping multiple and different "Francophone" languages, cultures and identities becomes reconceptualizing Francophone curriculum perspectives, lived and planned, to re-present the francophonies albertaines and canadiennes and "Francophones", both in pluralistic and problematic ways, if curriculum is to contribute to the vitality and renewal of Francophone communities across Canada.

It is my hope that this discussion will invite curriculum workers (such as my colleagues)

> to imagine a new transformation of social consciousness which exceeds the reified identities and rigid boundaries invoked by national consciousness... Nativism, as Said writes, "is *not* the only alternative. There is the possibility of a more generous and pluralistic vision of the world" (Said, 1993 cited in Ghandi, 1998, p. 124).

Fundamental to the vision of the expanding Francophone curriculum perspectives in Alberta (and across Canada), as well as the new Alberta social studies curriculum, are postcolonial approaches to broaden students' and teachers' representation and understanding of pluralism in Canadian and Francophone contexts. Gérin-Lajoie (2004) profoundly challenges the raison d'être of the Francophone school and, although her discussion pertains to Ontario, the same can be said for Alberta's Francophone schools. As she explains,

> Nous ne pouvons donc plus parler de l'école comme étant le point de rassemblement d'une communauté qui partage sans contredit les mêmes intérêts, puisque dans bien des cas, les membres de cette communauté ne partagent ni la même langue ni la même culture. Force est de constater que l'école compose avec des élèves qui ont souvent peu en commun avec la francophonie telle qu'elle est souvent conçue en Ontario, c'est-à-dire une francophonie qui s'inscrit dans une réalité que je qualifierais de « folklorique », qui ne tient pas compte de la nouvelle réalité pluraliste de la société francophone urbaine (p. 173).

Alberta's (and Ontario's) rapidly changing Francophone community is, therefore, an excellent starting point for considering postcolonial pedagogy and curriculum.

Reciting the francophonie

> Our society has become a recited society, in three senses: it is defined by *stories* (*récits*, the fables constituted by our advertising and informational media), by *citations* of stories, and by the interminable *recitation* of stories (de Certeau, 1988, p. 186).

The sharing of visions and voices through literary and lyrical texts, magical images and social cultures can explore issues of history, memory, language, and geography. They can also ultimately explore issues of identity. On a practical level, facilitating the focus group discussion was a challenge. On a theoretical level, exploring the focus group experience was revealing. As a teacher, curriculum has come to mean the stories we tell students about the world. As a Francophone (teacher), it has also come to mean the stories we tell young people about Canada and about being, becoming Francophone as well as belonging to the Francophone (and Anglophone) community.

The words, thoughts and feelings of my former students, aged 12 and 13, and their perceptions of what it means to be Francophone in Alberta and Canada can serve as sign-posts to the past, present and future francophonie. From poststructural and postcolonial perspectives, reflecting upon their responses can lead researchers and curriculum workers to explore the dynamic relationship between history, memory, language and geography and pose systematic questions about ways of knowing and being in Francophone communities in a minority setting such as Alberta.

In Chapter 11, *A Retrospective*, I offer possibilities to guide the future direction of curriculum studies and Francophone education in Canada, as well as tracings of my and my students' selves as Francophones in Alberta – in hopes (borrowing from Belsey, 2002) of continuing the ongoing conversation that is Francophone identity, and of thinking – and, most importantly, of seeing – beyond the limits of what is already recognizable and acknowledging what is possible.

CHAPTER 11

A RETROSPECTIVE

But where am I in the stories I tell? Not the storyteller but the woman in the story, the woman who believes in story. What is the truth about her?

– Dorothy Allison (1996, p. 4)

Les murs de nos villages se souviennent
Les murs de nos villages se rappellent
nos racines dans ce pays
aussi creuses que celles d'un vieux chêne.

Au matin de notre peuple,
nous avions la quête du pays au ventre, au coeur...
et nous l'avons encore.

– excerpt from Jean-Marc Dalpé's poem,
Les murs de nos villages (1980)

Mur de l'appartenance
exiguïté de la vaste prairie
souchitude
francité aux racines bien ancrées
old stock born and bred
non pas vous étrangers
Français d'ailleurs francophones Franco-Albertains
Mur de l'insolence de l'intransigeance
Absence
érasure rature marge
solitude

– excerpt from Eileen Lokha's poem,
Albertitude (2005, p. 3)

Tracing Laura in Alberta, *les traces de Laura en Alberta*

1. Names mean a lot to Francophones, especially the French Canadian ones that can be traced and recalled. *Je suis Laura, née à Sainte-Anne-des-Pins. Sainte-Anne-des-Pins, un nom d'autrefois, en raison de ses forêts denses.* With the discovery of precious metals, during the construction of the Canadian Pacific railway in the 1870s and 1880s, *Sainte-Anne-des-Pins* was renamed Sudbury.

2. I named my first dog Mimi. Our neighbours still proudly comment on our 'bilingual' basset hound. It's easier for dogs to be perceived as French in Alberta than humans. *Assis, Mimi. Bravo.* Good dog.

3. Why would they call a place Caster? While attending an Alberta Catholic teachers' conference in Kananaskis in 2002, I met teachers from rural Alberta. When they told me where they were from, I was puzzled. Are you hard-working people in Castor? We all had a great laugh over my mistake. Over 2000 Alberta place names are French.

4. When opening a savings account at a local Alberta credit union in 2005, the manager politely told me that 'six cents' would not be a sufficient amount. I politely reassured her that six hundred dollars would be enough in this centennial year.

5. When describing a Franco-Albertan and all-French wedding I had attended in Edmonton to a friend, I was asked if the Francophone priest had been flown in for the occasion.

6. When giving my address at a national call centre or introducing myself at a national conference, I say that I am from Edmonton. Inevitably, Francophones across Canada are stumped: I—*la francophone*—must be from Edmundston (New Brunswick), the Gateway of the Maritimes. Ma porte d'entrée est autre—*francophone des Prairies*.

7. Being a Francophone teacher-researcher on the Prairies has afforded me the opportunity to bear witness to Alberta and to *l'Alberta*. Alberta's ground, as a ground of hope, of promise, is fertile; the future *francophonies* are taking shape here. If traces of heres and theres, pasts and presents are recalled, then what shapes will Francophone identities take? Listen closely to the traces of my former students. *Car, mes participants sont également des témoins d'un passé qui leur est propre. C'est grâce à eux et elles que nous, francophones en Alberta, peuvent interpeller leurs passés, leurs présents, leurs mémoires. C'est ainsi que la francophonie nous revient à l'esprit. Écoutez et vous verrez...*

Wandering and wondering about Alberta

I carry the cities of Sudbury and *Saint-Anne-des-Pins* inside of me; in return, they carry me, and have carried me, all the way to Alberta. They have also carried me in ways that I have come to appreciate: in my wanderings across Canada and overseas and in my wonderings about self, community, and curriculum.

At the outset of this *re*-search journey, I sought to tell a double quest: a quest for understanding the francophonie I inhabit along with students in an urban Francophone school community, and a quest for understanding the Francophone I am becoming. What I have learned in my re-search is numerous parallel stories between histories and memories, those of my self and others, stories on a continuum of struggle and change. As the daughter of a Francophone mother and an Anglophone father, as a Francophone outside Québec, and as an English teacher in a Francophone school, I have long been preoccupied with Canada's *two solitudes* – and with the ways in which 'English Canada' and 'French Canada' have been and continue to be portrayed in curriculum, classrooms and the media. And this has led me to ask innumerable questions: questions of Francophone and Canadian history and collective memory, questions of dominant and non privileged cultures and languages; and questions about the relationships between learning and teaching and ways of knowing who 'Francophones' are.

While certain federalist and sovereigntist politicians and many Canadian citizens continue to believe that the era of two solitudes remains the primary binary relationship between Canada and Québec, I am more preoccupied by the two solitudes that exist between home-grown French Canadian Francophones and new Francophone immigrants. For the divide between these two French-speaking groups is *souchitude*, the wall of belonging or unbelonging that creates solitudes within an already small yet vibrant Francophone community. Alberta's Francophone community is rapidly changing, precipitated by accelerating pluralism and a booming economy, changing 'the Francophone', and this is creating much angst, uncertainty and ambiguity around the boundaries between Francophones from here and there, Francophone stories from past and present, Francophone identities from then and now. In other words, migration and immigration to Alberta is bringing the ghosts of the French and Belgian empires to Canada. It is unsettling the empires within Canada because increased Francophone immigration, most visibly from Africa, invites various questions about what and who counts as Franco-Albertan *de souche*.

There is a malaise within my school community. Edwards (2005) might say we are haunted by a "spectre of authenticity" – a spectre of a questionable past, or the discovery of a forgotten past. When the past is discovered to be a complicated web of colonial and postcolonial stories, the quest for a unified national identity becomes troubling. Edwards (2005) argues that collective stories about national identity and belonging tend to be haunted by artifice. And when identity groups, such as Franco-Albertans, craft an historical image of themselves that is self-deceiving, people are compelled to re-visit the past because they are being confronted with the future. For a prosperous Alberta, the future involves an increasing number of Francophone newcomers, whether from Québec or Africa, who are intervening in and changing ideas of language, culture, and history. And, generally speaking, Franco-Albertans seem haunted by a sense of identity that many are unwilling to let go.

Re-visiting one's history is a troubling proposition because it can lead to a re-questioning of an imagined national identity. Put another way, what French Canadians and Franco-Albertans, specifically, take to be authentic is a ghost. As Edwards (2005, p. xiii) writes, "Stories of the past, stories that tell us who we are, tend to be haunted by a panic that the shared narrative might be an elaborate artifice, a social imaginary." So, the French Canadian nation could be a ghost story. Anderson (1991) would agree: nations are "imagined communities" that tend to "loom out of an immemorial past" (p. 11). All of North America, contends Marchand (2005), was a sort of failed French empire. But this does not mean that it failed elsewhere; in fact, it rose in other parts of the world. And it is this dark spectre that haunts the golden prairies of Western Canada. The ghost of a colonized and colonizing self returns to haunt Francophones in Alberta again and again. As Edwards (2005, p. 168) explains, "This spectre is a sign of instability, insecurity and colonization. It is the sign of the land itself, and the land's history. It signifies the triumph of Canadian nationalism, but it also serves as a prophesy of its failure." Stories of a distant past and a distant land not only tell us who we are, but they also reveal the cultural anxieties and layers of colonization that are aroused when the dominant French Canadian (Franco-Albertan) narrative is put into question.

The reality of being Francophone in Canada and Alberta is messy. National discourses about fixed French Canadian identity and increasingly fluid ones in a pluralistic society such as Canada are constructing the non-European French-speaking immigrant or refugee as Other. French Canadian culture attempts to bury racial, cultural, and religious Others. However, ghosts of the Other will not remain buried as Francophone Canadians try to articulate a presumed unified national identity. In sharing the narratives of my students, young Francophones in Alberta, I have unsettled the ghosts of authenticity and history within: no matter how "Francophone" is defined, Francophones are a multiethnic, multiracial, multilingual, multicultural and multifaith people – even in Alberta. By facing accelerating pluralism and the ghosts that haunt us, Francophone Albertans and Canadians can attempt to make sense of a postcolonial Francophone identity. In re-entering the divided world around them and re-imagining Francophone history and identity, they can ponder, what Behar (1996) calls, the "presence of the past" in shaping their pluralistic future.

Re-searching curriculum in hopes of seeing more

Rapid changes in demographics in Francophone (minority) communities across Canada are unprecedented, especially in Alberta, and this contemporary statistical fact is challenging the Francophone community and Francophones themselves to rethink questions of language, culture and identity and, ultimately, questions of belonging. Jedwab (2007) suggests that Francophone minority communities are evolving and declining simultaneously, largely due to immigration. Considering low Francophone birth rates and increasing rates of linguistic and cultural assimilation, the Franco-Albertan community is shrinking. Considering the increasing presence of Francophones in Alberta, largely due to migration and immigration, the Franco-Albertan community is growing. But does 'Franco-Albertan' mean the same thing in both instances? Is the community 'Franco-Albertan' or 'Francophone'? The challenge, in the face of rapidly shifting Francophone demographics, means rethinking who belongs to this community. In the Francophone school context, this also means reconsidering curriculum (both as plan and as lived). Whose stories get told and whose don't? And if belonging is already so critical to developing a solid Francophone identity, as outlined by the educational project of Francophone schools, then what happens to belonging?

In facing these enormous challenges and in my continual search for more different and expansive Francophone curriculum perspectives, I yearn for hope, curricular moments of hope. As a Francophone teacher-researcher living in Alberta and who has long grappled with contentious meanings of Francophone being, becoming and belonging, I look to the individual and collective life experiences of my student participants – the life curriculum of 12- and 13-year-old students – who have not described Francophones and their lived experiences in neat, tidy ways. Rather, their narratives of Francophone identity tell me that, although the category of "the Francophone" may be impossible to define, it offers multiple possibilities – if we embrace them. In other words, the difficulty of identifying Francophone identity (especially in the singular, but also in the plural) invites me to continue to live my quest(ions) because curriculum is a lasting conversation relating a multitude of histories and memories to the lived experiences of learners in the world (Grumet, 1995, p. 19), but also an adventure into meaning which students and teachers should lend their lives in hopes of seeing more (Greene, 1991, p. 121).

Together with ten of my former Grade 7 students at one urban Francophone Catholic secondary school, we embarked on a quest into understanding what it means to be(come) Francophone, to live in this place called Alberta, and to (re)consider intersections of history and memory, at once familial, individual and collective. Not only did my student participants share their storied world with me (individual interviews) and with each other (focus group interview), they also lent their lives to their teacher-researcher, their Alberta school community and to Canada and, ultimately, contributed to the ongoing (curricular) conversation of identity and difference, belonging and be(com)ing, and Francophone education.

In wandering and wondering about Alberta since my arrival in 1999, I take comfort in my students' narratives of identity because, for me, they map hopeful stories: they give promise for a future of a Francophone world of plural identities and multiple belongings. A world in which they and I can belong. A world in which they and I can call home. Chambers (2006) invites curriculum theorists to offer a radically different notion of home, especially for the young. "We need to imagine home," she suggests, "[as] the physical, emotional and spiritual places where we learn to be at home with others, as well as, ourselves" (n.p.). How do 'Francophones' relate to one another (and to others) when 'home' is differently imagined in the postcolonial present? How do 'we' struggle into being, to become, to let people, especially the young, to choose themselves in plural spaces (Greene, 1996)? Can 'we' not turn to young Francophones and acknowledge their ways of seeing and saying the Francophone world? Can curriculum workers not listen to the questions that youth narratives might provoke? For Francophone education faces the challenge of creating an understanding curriculum, a home for Franco-Albertans *de souche* and for Francophones from elsewhere, a place where young people especially are invited to cross boundaries and meet others who are different (Vanier, 2003), because now the Francophone school has become the communal meeting place of Francophones in Alberta. After all, the Francophone school has become the primary location of a collective Francophone and French-speaking home.

Jean Vanier (2003), in his book *Finding Peace*, suggests that real peace is about relationship, being in relation with other. He suggests that a quest for peace means moving from a place of mourning to a place of gentle or personal encounter. As he writes, "We begin to move towards peace as we move away from our own labels and the labels we have put on others, and meet heart to heart, person to person" (p. 42). Working towards peace and, in turn, love and justice requires "hard work", emphasizing that "it can bring pain because it implies loss – loss of certitudes, comforts, and hurts that shelter and define us" (p. 44). Imagining a radically different Francophone home in Alberta can be painful not only because a rapidly shifting Franco-Albertan community is witnessing an intensified coming together of Francophone peoples in 'their' home, but also because young people who make up this community are shifting towards a fluid, hybrid and diasporic Francophone identity. Therefore, what does the future hold for Alberta's Francophone (school) community, if home is disrupted by competing memories in general and by the diasporic present in particular?

The role of the Francophone school necessarily changes in a world of diasporic Francophone identities and communities. My students' narratives highlight the importance of paying attention to particular cultures, languages, histories, memories and geographies, and how these particularities shape and are shaped by changing circumstances. The insights gained from juxtaposing the responses of a diverse Francophone student group can encourage a critical awareness of the problems and possibilities of re-producing and re-presenting narratives of 'Francophone' identity (especially in the singular) – because there is no single way to represent Francophone identity or reality. Each narrative offers a way to think about borders and spaces, about how boundaries and categories are perceived, represented and negotiated. Each narrative challenges assumptions and stereotypes about Francophones in Canada (and Alberta). Each narrative problematizes the conception of *mission* of the Francophone school which justifies the importance of pride, belonging and identity (in the singular) because it assumes that students will be categorically Francophone. My students' narratives illustrate that new ways of imagining 'Francophone' identity is possible. In fact, alternative narratives of identity are necessary if the future of a diasporic francophonie is to be dynamic. Reconceptualizing the role of the Francophone school, then, is one way to create a communal sense of belonging. Perhaps if belonging is imagined differently, then hopefully the Francophone school can secure a new sense of home in Alberta.

Reconceptualizing Francophone identity and curriculum in the postcolonial present

> We slip between definitions with such acrobatic ease that straight narrative is impossible. I cannot conceive of my story as one of simple progress, or simple woe.
>
> – Eva Hoffman (1989, p. 164)

The paradoxes of narratives of Francophone identity in Alberta, Canada invite me to pay close attention to inclusions and exclusions, to the ambiguities of being and becoming Francophone, but also naming 'the Francophone' in a time when recognition of diversity and difference is vital to social cohesion – not only of Canada, but of the local, national and international francophonies. While governments have instituted attempts to recognize pluralism, for example, by mandating Alberta teachers to teach social studies from "multiple perspectives," including intercultural Francophone ones (Alberta Education, 2005), I wonder how to convince (Francophone) teachers that this is a valuable project when the idea of reconceptualizing Francophone identity and curriculum in more expansive ways can be so unsettling. That is, teachers and students in Francophone schools need to address multiple Francophone perspectives, emphasizing the plural and even the partial, because teaching and learning about 'the Francophone world' will always involve an incomplete view. And this partial, plural view of Francophones must be embraced because new ways of being, becoming and belonging are emerging. As curriculum workers, then, we need to reconsider what it means to be Francophone and re-imagine the Francophone school as a site of possibility and of hope.

In hopes of intertwining Francophone stories as a multiplicity of histories, memories, ancestries and identities, I seek the potential for Francophone education and the possibilities for community and belonging. I am excited about the possibilities of seeing the francophonie as hybrid, ambiguous, complex, even incomplete. I seek solace in knowing that the overlapping narratives of my students free me from the chains of a *pure laine* and stereotypical view of Francophones. In this immense world of possibility and creativity, a world I share with these young people, I exist, I belong, I continue, I see more. As Greene (1996) reminds me, "If we can empower young people and move them to shape their stories and to tell them, to present something of their realities in an open space, then we also may provoke them to pose the questions in which learning always begins" (p. 36). In light of my research study, I raise the following unanswered questions around notions of identity formation, pluralism and empire.

First, how would the stories of my 12- and 13-year-old students be the same and/or different in five to ten years? My research project with Grade 7 students in one urban Francophone school in a rapidly changing Alberta begs a longitudinal study.

Second, in an era of accelerating pluralism, how can the Francophone school work towards a pedagogical project in the postcolonial moment, one that better represents itself to itself (and to Canada)? That is, given the increasing plurality of the Francophone student body, what would teaching young Francophones about the age of empire(s) as past and present look like? How would Francophone pedagogical history be taught and how would students respond? Third, and finally, how do the notions of 'home' and 'empire' collide, especially in postcolonial Francophone communities 'outside' Québec? Remapping Francophone communities within 'English Canada' as a multi-sited imperial landscape can challenge traditional cultural, linguistic, religious and geographic boundaries of who counts as Francophone in Canada. Above all, how does challenging national/ist assumptions enable us to (re)imagine the map(s) of Francophone education, pedagogy and curriculum? It becomes important, as changing (racial, linguistic, religious) demographics force us to think about the future of Francophone communities (and the legacies of multiple empires playing out in these communities), to remap national Francophone imaginaries in the present in order to think beyond and within the boundaries and borders of 'English Canada' and 'French Canada'.

En guise de conclusion: Quand le soleil se couche à l'est

> Live your questions now, and perhaps even without knowing it,
> you will live along some distant day into your answers.
> – Rainer Maria Rilke

My stories – and all of the stories I have heard and been told – have shaped, and continue to shape, my life. My choice of sub-title, *en guise de conclusion*, reflects this sense of continuity – an evolving sense of identity and, in turn, storytelling. The French expression '*en guise de'* meaning '*à la place de*' speaks to the impossibility of concluding this chapter of my life. Rather, I prefer that stories go on living so that I may.

After 10 years out west, I am beginning to realize that the sun is setting, at least for now, on the east (read Ontario). But if I am to continue living here, in Alberta and *Alberta français*, I need to continue to share a world of uncertainties, ambiguities, complexities, possibilities with my students, colleagues, friends and family. In sharing a world inbetween places, histories and memories, I will not always know where I am because 'I' is always re-invented and the community(ies) to which I belong need(s) to be continually re-imagined.

La francophonie n'est pas une langue. Elle en est plusieurs. La francophonie n'est pas une culture. Elle en est plusieurs. Elle n'est pas une communauté. Elle en est plusieurs. La francophonie est imaginaire et doit être ré-imaginée. Car, la francophonie n'est pas une. Elle est plurielle – une idée vivante et plus encore.

As I continue to live the questions and seek solace in the curriculum stories that sustain me, my hope is that others, along with me, will try to live and, ultimately, embrace a re-imagined francophonie. For it is the multiple narratives of Francophone identities that map who, what and where we are (becoming).

References

AFI (Agora francophone internationale). (2006). *L'Année francophone internationale. An 2005*. Québec & Paris: Éditions CIDEF-AFI.

AFI. (1999). *L'Année francophone internationale. An 2000*. Québec & Paris: Éditions CIDEF-AFI.

Alberta Education. Curriculum Branch. (2005). *Social studies kindergarten to grade 12: Resource draft*. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Alberta Education. Information Services Branch. (2007). *Statistics and research. Facts about Alberta's education system*. Retrieved January 30, 2007, from http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/pubstats/StatRes.asp

Alberta Learning. Curriculum Branch. (2003). *Social studies grade 4 to grade 12: Validation draft*. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Alberta Learning. Curriculum Branch. (2000). *English Language Arts K-9*. Retrieved May 30, 2005 from: http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k%5F12/curriculum/bySubject/english/elaK-9.pdf

Alberta Learning. Curriculum Branch. (1989). *Social studies program of studies: Grades 7-9*. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Alberta Learning. Direction de l'éducation française. (2004). *Teaching English language arts to Francophone program students: Pedagogical considerations*. Retrieved June 17, 2005, from Alberta Education: http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/french/anglais/ped_cons.pdf

Alberta Learning. Direction de l'éducation française (2003). *Programme d'études sociales: de la maternelle à la douzième année* (ébauche à des fins de consultation). Edmonton, AB: Author.

Alberta Learning. Direction de l'éducation française (2001). *Affirmer l'éducation en français langue première – fondements et orientations: Le cadre de l'éducation francophone en Alberta*. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Alberta Learning. Learning and Teaching Resources Branch (2004). *Focus on inquiry: A teacher's guide to implementing inquiry-based learning*. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Allaire, G. (2001). *La francophonie canadienne: portraits* (revised edition). Québec & Sudbury: CIDEF-AFI, Université Laval & Prise de Parole.

Allison, D. (1996 [1995]). *Two or three things I know for sure*. New York: Plume.

Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Revised edition. London & New York: Verso.

Aoki, T. (1991a). Sonare and videre: Questioning the primacy of the eye in curriculum talk. In G. Willis & W.H. Schubert (Eds.), *Reflections from the heart of educational inquiry: Understanding curriculum and teaching through the arts* (pp. 182-189). New York: State University of New York Press.

Aoki, T. (1991b). Teaching as in-dwelling between two curriculum worlds. In T. Aoki (Ed.), *Inspiriting curriculum and pedagogy: Talks to teachers* (pp. 7-10). Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. (2002a). *The empire writes back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures* (2nd ed.). London & New York: Routledge.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. (2002b). *Post-colonial studies: The key concepts*. London & New York: Routledge.

Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO). (2006). *Nos écoles, notre avenir!* Document d'orientation. Retrieved January 31, 2007, from http://www.aefo.on.ca/Rapports/aefo_doc_orientation_2006_web.pdf

Atlas de la francophonie. (2006). *Alberta*. Retrieved February 12, 2007, from http://franco.ca/atlas/francophonie/francais/impre.cfm?Id=1

Atwood, M. (1972). *Survival: A thematic guide to Canadian literature*. Toronto, ON: Anansi Press.

Aubin, B. (2004, August 2). Outcasts no longer: 250 years of survival. *MacLean's*, 33-36.

Barr, R., Barth, J. & Shermis, S. (1977). *Defining the social studies*. Bulletin 51. Arlington, VA: National Council for the Social Studies.

Behar, R. (1996). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Behiels, M.D. (2004). *Canada's Francophone minority communities: Constitutional renewal and the winning of school governance*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Belsey, C. (2002). *Poststructuralism: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Berger, M. J. (2002). *Le nouveau visage de la francophonie: Vivre à l'heure du multiculturalisme dans un contexte francophone minoritaire: pluralisme, exogamie, inclusion*. Ottawa: Université d'Ottawa.

Bergeron, J. (1999). Identité choisie, imposée, suggérée. *Francophonies d'Amérique*, 9, 143-156.

Bernard-Powers, J. (1995). Out of the cameos and into the conversation: Gender, social studies, and curriculum transformation. In J. Gaskell & J. Willinsky (Eds.), *Gender in/forms curriculum: From enrichment to transformation* (pp. 191-207). New York: Teachers College Press.

Bhabha, H.K. (2006 [1994]). *The location of culture*. London & New York: Routledge.

Bhabha, H.K. (1991). Introduction: Narrating the nation. In H. Bhabha (Ed.), *Nation and narration* (pp. 1-7). London: Routledge.

Boler, M. (1999). *Feeling power: Emotions and education*. New York & London: Routlege.

Boler, M. & Zembylas, M. (2003). Discomforting truths: The emotional terrain of understanding difference. In P. Pericles Trifonas (Ed.), *Pedagogies of difference: Rethinking education for social change* (pp. 110-136). New York & London: Routledge Falmer.

Boissonneault, J. (2004). Se dire... mais comment et pourquoi? Réflexions sur les marqueurs d'identité en Ontario français [Electronic version]. *Francophonies d'Amérique*, 18, 163-169.

Boissonneault, J. (1996). Bilingue/francophone, Franco-Ontarien/Canadien français : choix des marques d'identification chez les étudiants francophones. *Revue du Nouvel-Ontario*, 20, 173-193.

Bouchard, M. (2003). Perdre la langue française et l'identité franco-albertaine: une discussion anthropologique sur l'identité francophone de la région de Rivière-la-Paix. In N. Kermoal (Ed.), *Variations sur un thème: la francophonie albertaine dans tous ses états* (pp. 127-151). Edmonton, AB: Salon d'histoire de la francophonie albertaine.

Britzman, D.P. (2003). *Practice makes practice: A critical study of learning to teach*. Revised edition. New York: State University of New York Press.

Britzman, D.P. et al. (1993). Slips that show and tell: Fashioning multiculture as a problem of representation. In C. McCarthy & W. Crichlow (Eds.), *Race, identity, and representation* (pp. 188-200). New York & London: Routledge.

Burton, A. (Ed.) (2003). *After the imperial turn: Thinking with and through the nation.* Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Calle-Gruber, M. & Cixous, H. (1994). *Hélène Cixous, photos de racines*. Paris: DesFemmes.

Canada. Department of Canadian Heritage (2004). *Multiculturalism*. Retrieved May 11, 2005 from Canadian Heritage: http://www.pch.gc.ca

Canada. Department of Canadian Heritage (2004). *Official languages – community development and linguistic duality*. Bulletin 41-42, Vol. 9, No. 2. Retrieved March 30, 2005 from Canadian Heritage: http://www.patrimoinecanadien.gc.ca/progs/lo-ol/bulletin/vol9_no2/plan3_e.cfm#3h

Canada. Ministry of Supply and Services. (2003). *The next act: new momentum for Canada's linguistic duality : the action plan for official languages*. Ottawa, ON: Author.

Carr, E. (1946). *Growing pains: An autobiography*. Toronto, ON: Irwin.

Chambers, C, (2006). "Where do I belong?" Canadian curriculum as passport home, *Journal of the American Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies*. Retrieved December 16, 2006 from JAAACS: http://www.uwstout.edu/soe/jaaacs/vol2/index.htm

Chambers, C. (2004). Research that matters: Finding a path with heart. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 2(1), 1-19.

Chambers, C. (1999). A topography for Canadian curriculum theory. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 24(2), 137-150.

Chambers, C. (1998). On taking my own (love) medicine: Memory work in writing and pedagogy. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 14(4), 14-21.

Chambers, C., Donald, D. & Hasebe-Ludt, E. (2002a). Memory and métissage: Three creation stories. *Educational Insights*. Retrieved March 4, 2003 from the University of British Columbia: http://www.csci.educ.ubc.ca/publications/insights/v07n02/metissage/index.html

Chambers, C., Donald, D. & Hasebe-Ludt, E. (2002b). Métissage: Métissage script. *Educational Insights*. Retrieved March 4, 2003 from the University of British Columbia: http://www.csci.educ.ubc.ca/publication/insights/v07n02/metissage/metiscript.html

Chase, S.E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*, 3rd edition (pp. 651–679). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Chaudenson, R. (1999). Situation et avenir du français: Quelques aperçus, non conformistes. In M. Tétu (Ed.), *L'Année francophone internationale: An 2000* (pp. 321-324). Québec: AFI.

Clark, P. (2004). The historical context of social studies in English Canada. In A. Sears & I. Wright (Eds.), *Challenges & prospects for Canadian social studies* (pp. 17-37). Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press.

Clark, P. & Case, R. (1999). Four purposes of citizenship education. In R. Case & P. Clark (Eds.), *The Canadian anthology of social studies: Issues and strategies for teachers* (pp. 17-27). Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press.

Cochran-Smith, M. (1995). Color blindness and basket making are not the answers: Confronting the dilemmas of race, culture, and language diversity in teacher education. *American Educational Research Journal,* 32(3), 493-522.

Cochran-Smith, M. (1991). Learning to teach against the grain. *Harvard Educational Review*, 61(3), 279-310.

Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Culler, J. (2002). *Barthes: A very short introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Couture, C. & Bergeron, J. (2002). Le multiculturalisme francophone et la question de la différence. In C. Couture & J. Bergeron (Eds.), *L'Alberta et le multiculturalisme francophone: témoignages et problématiques* (pp. 15-18). Edmonton: Centre d'études canadiennes de la Faculté Saint-Jean et l'Association Multiculturelle Francophone de l'Alberta.

Dallaire, C. (2006). "I am English too": Francophone youth hybridities in Canada. In P. Nilan and C. Feixa (Eds.), *Global Youth? Hybrid Identities, Plural Worlds* (pp. 32-52). London & New York: Routledge.

Dallaire, C. (2004). "Fier de qui on est… nous sommes FRANCOPHONES!": L'identité des jeunes aux Jeux franco-ontariens [Electronic version]. *Francophonies d'Amérique*, 18, 127-147.

Dallaire, C. (2003). "Not just Francophones": The hybridity of minority Francophone youths in Canada. *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, (28), 163-199.

Dallaire, C. & Denis, C. (2000). "If you don't speak French, you're out": Don Cherry, the Alberta Francophone Games, and the Discursive Construction of Canada's Francophones [Electronic version]. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 25(4), 415-440.

Dalley, P. (2006). Héritiers des mariages mixtes: possibilités identitaires [Electronic version]. *Éducation et francophonie*, 34(1), 82-94.

Dalley, P. (2002). Le multiculturalisme et l'école de la minorité francophone. In C. Couture & J. Bergeron (Eds.), *L'Alberta et le multiculturalisme francophone: témoignages et problématiques* (pp. 127-143). Edmonton: Centre d'études canadiennes de la Faculté Saint-Jean et l'Association Multiculturelle Francophone de l'Alberta.

Dalpé, J.-M. (1980). *Les murs de nos villages*. Ottawa, ON: Éditions Prise de Parole.

Dansereau, E., Sing, P.M., Lokha, E. & Dubé, P. (Eds.) (2005). *Alberta, village sans mur(s)*. Winnipeg, MB: Presses universitaires de Saint-Boniface.

Davis, B., Sumara D. & Luce-Kapler, L. (2000). *Engaging minds: Learning and teaching in a complex world*. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates.

de Castell, S. (1996). On finding one's place in the text: Literacy as a technology of self-formation. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* (Winter), 27-31.

de Certeau, M. (1988). *The practice of everyday life*. Trans. Steven Rendall. Berkeley & Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Deniau, X. (2001). *La francophonie, Collection « Que sais-je ? »*. Édition actualisée, Cinquième édition mise à jour. Paris: Presses universitaires de France.

De Villers, M.É. (2003). *Multidictionnaire de la langue française* (4^{e} édition). Montréal, QC: Éditions Québec-Amérique.

Dimitriadis, G. & McCarthy, C. (2001). *Reading and teaching the postcolonial: From Baldwin to Basquiat and beyond*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Dion, Susan D. (2004). (Re)telling to Disrupt: Aboriginal People and Stories of Canadian History. *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 2(1): 55-76.

Dubé, P. (2002). De la parole aux actes: plaidoyer pour l'hétérogène à l'école de la minorité francophone. In C. Couture & J. Bergeron (Eds.), *L'Alberta et le multiculturalisme francophone: témoignages et problématiques* (pp. 89-102). Edmonton: Centre d'études canadiennes de la Faculté Saint-Jean et l'Association Multiculturelle Francophone de l'Alberta.

Durrigan Santora, E. (2001). Interrogating privilege, plurality and possibilities in a multicultural society. In W.B. Stanley (Ed.), *Critical issues in social studies research for the 21st century* (pp. 149-177). Greenwich, Connecticut: Information Age Publishing Inc.

Edwards, J.D. (2005). *Gothic Canada: reading the spectre of a national literature*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press.

Egan, K. (1999). *Children's minds, talking rabbits and clockwork oranges: Essays in education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Eisner, E. (1992). Curriculum ideologies. In P. Jackson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on curriculum: A project of the American Educational Research Association*. New York: MacMillan Publishing.

Ellsworth, E. (1989). Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. *Harvard Educational Review*, 59(3), 297-324.

Evans, R.W. (2001). Teaching social issues: implementing an issues-centered curriculum. In E.W. Ross (Ed.), *The social studies curriculum: Purposes, problems, and possibilities* (pp. 291-309). Revised edition. New York: State University of New York Press.

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada (2004). *Francophone Community Profile of Alberta* (2nd edition). Ottawa: Author.

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne (FCFA) du Canada (2001). *Parlons-nous! Dialogue* (Rapport du groupe de travail Dialogue). Ottawa: Author.

Filax, G. (2004). Issues and agenda: Producing homophobia in Alberta, Canada in the 1990s. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 17(1), 87-120.

Findley, T. (1990). *Inside memory: Pages from a writer's workbook.* Toronto, ON: HarperCollins Publishers Ltd.

Fine, M. (1994). Working the hyphens: Reinventing self and other in qualitative research. In N.K Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 70-82). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Fitzgerald, L. (Director). (1999). *Remembering memory* [videorecording]. Montréal, QC: National Film Board of Canada.

Fortier, J. (2007, 19 janvier). Les catholiques francophones perdent un allié. *Le Franco*, p. 7.

Foucault, M. (1988). Technologies of the self. In L.H. Martin, H. Gutman & P.H. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (pp. 16-49). Amherst, MA: The University of Massachussetts Press.

Francis, D. (1997). *National dreams: Myth, memory, and Canadian history*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

Fuss, D. (1989). *Essentially speaking: Feminism, nature & difference*. New York: Routledge.

Gérin-Lajoie, D. (2006). La contribution de l'école au processus de construction identitaire des élèves dans une société pluraliste [Electronic version]. *Éducation et francophonie*, 34(1), 1-7.

Gérin-Lajoie, D. (2004). La problématique identitaire et l'école de langue française en Ontario [Electronic version]. *Francophonies d'Amérique*, 18, 171-179.

Gérin-Lajoie, D. (2003). Parcours identitaires de jeunes francophones en milieu minoritaire. Sudbury, ON: Prise de Parole.

Ghandi, L. (1998). *Postcolonial theory: A critical introduction*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Ghosh, R. & Abdi, A. (2004). *Education and the politics of difference: Canadian perspectives*. Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Gibson, S. (2005). A quest for learning social studies (2nd edition). Boston: Pearson.

Gikandi, S. (2004). Poststructuralism and postcolonial discourse. In N. Lazarus (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to postcolonial literary studies* (pp. 97-119). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gikandi, S. (1996). *Maps of Englishness: Writing identity in the culture of colonialism*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Greene, M. (1997). Curriculum and consciousness. In D.J. Flinders & S.J. Thornton (Eds.), *The Curriculum Studies Reader/Teachers College Record* (pp. 137-149). New York: Routledge.

Greene, M. (1994). Epistemology and educational research: The influence of recent approaches to knowledge. In L. Darling-Hammond (Ed.), *Review of research in* *education* (pp. 423-464), Volume 20. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.

Greene, M. (1991). Blue guitars and the search for curriculum. In G. Willis & W.H. Schubert (Eds.), *Reflections from the heart of educational inquiry: Understanding curriculum and teaching through the arts* (pp. 107-122). New York: State University of New York Press.

Grumet, M.R. (1995). The curriculum: What are the basics and are we teaching them? In J.L. Kincheloe & S.R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Thirteen questions: Reframing education's conversation,* 2nd edition (pp. 15-21). New York: Peter Lang.

Grumet, M. (1995). Scholae personae: Masks for meaning. In J. Gallop (Ed.) *Pedagogy: The question of impersonation* (pp. 36-45). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Gutting, G. (2005). *Foucault: A very short introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Haig-Brown, C. (1995). "Two worlds together": Contradiction and curriculum in First Nations adult science education. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly,* 26(2), 193-212.

Hall, S. (1994). Cultural identity and diaspora. In P. Williams & L. Chrisman (Eds.), *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory: A reader* (pp. 392-403). New York: Columbia University Press.

Heller, M. (1999). Alternative ideologies of la francophonie. *Journal of Sociolinguistics,* 3(3), 336-359.

Hodgetts, A. (1968). What culture? What heritage? A study of civic education in Canada. Toronto, ON: OISE Press.

Hoffman, E. (1989). *Lost in translation: Life in a new language.* New York: Penguin Books.

Houser, N.O. & Kuzmic, J.J. (2001). Ethical citizenship in a postmodern world: Toward a more connected approach to social education for the twenty-first century. *Theory and Research in Social Education* 29(3): 431-461.

Howe, S. (2002). *Empire: A very short introduction.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Huddart, D. (2006). *Homi K. Bhabha.* London & New York: Routledge.

Hurren, W. (2003). Auto´·geo´·carto´·graphia´ (A curricular collage). In E. Hasebe-Ludt & W. Hurren (Eds.), *Curriculum intertext: Place/language/pedagogy* (pp. 111-121). New York & Washington, DC: Peter Lang.

Jedwab, J. (2007, 26 avril). *Comment maigrir et grandir simultanément? Le 'régime' démographique des communautés francophones dans le "ROC" (Rest of Canada)*. Dans le cadre de la série de conférences Louis Desrochers en études canadiennes. Edmonton, AB: Campus Saint-Jean, University of Alberta.

Jedwab, J. (2002). *Immigration and the vitality of Canada's official language communities: policy, demography and identity*. Ottawa: Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

Johnston, A. & Lawson, A. (2005). Settler colonies. In H. Schwarz & S. Ray (Eds.), *A companion to postcolonial studies* (pp. 360-376). London: Blackwell Publishing.

Johnston, I. (2003). *Re-mapping literary worlds: Postcolonial pedagogy in practice*. New York & Washington, DC: Peter Lang.

Kanu, Y. (2006). Introduction. In Y. Kanu (Ed.), *Curriculum as cultural practice: Postcolonial imaginations* (pp. 3-29). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Kanu, Y. (2003). Curriculum as cultural practice: Postcolonial imagination, *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 1(1), 67-81.

Kasuya, K. (2001). Discourses of Linguistic Dominance: A Historical Consideration of French Language Ideology. *International Review of Education*, 47(3-4), 235-251.

Kerby, A.P. (1991). *Narrative and the self*. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Khatibi, A. (1992). *Amour bilingue*. Casablanca: Éditions EDDIF.

Khatibi, A. (1971). *La mémoire tatouée: Autobiographie d'un décolonisé*. Paris: Éditions Denoël.

Kincheloe, J. (2001). *Getting beyond the facts: Teaching social studies/social sciences in the twenty-first century*. Second edition. New York: Peter Lang.

King, T. (2003). *The truth about stories: A native narrative*. CBC Massey Lecture Series. Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press Inc.

Klimt, A. & Lubkemann, S. (2002). Argument across the Portuguese-speaking world: A discursive approach to diaspora, *Diaspora*, 11(2), 145-162.

Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural citizenship: A liberal theory of minority rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lacombe, G. (1993). *Parle-moi de francophonie: religieux et religieuses*. Edmonton, AB: Les Éditions Duval.

Ladson-Billings, G. (2001). Crafting a culturally relevant social studies approach. In E.W. Ross (Ed.), *The social studies curriculum: Purposes, problems, and possibilities*, revised edition (pp. 201-215). New York: State University of New York Press.

Lafontant, J. (2002). Connais-toi toi-même. In C. Couture & J. Bergeron (Eds.), *L'Alberta et le multiculturalisme francophone: témoignages et problématiques* (pp. 103-110). Edmonton: Centre d'études canadiennes de la Faculté Saint-Jean et l'Association Multiculturelle Francophone de l'Alberta.

Laidlaw, L. (2004). On learning to write her name: An example of research informed by literary anthropology, *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies*, 2(1), 197-210.

Landry, R., Deveau, K. & Allard, R. (2006). Vitalité ethnolinguistique et construction identitaire: le cas de l'identité bilingue [Electronic version]. *Éducation et francophonie*, 34(1), 54-81.

Lanthier, S. (2007, June 1). Retrouver le goût du français: Colloque interprovincial à Winnipeg. *Le Franco*, pp. 6-7.

Laplante, B. (2001). Enseigner en milieu minoritaire: histoires d'enseignantes oeuvrant dans les écoles fransaskoises. *Revue des sciences de l'éducation*, 27(1), 127-150.

Larsen, N. (2005). Imperialism, colonialism, postcolonialism. In H. Schwarz & S. Ray (Eds.), *A companion to postcolonial studies* (pp. 23-52). London: Blackwell Publishing.

Léger, M. J. (2001). Memory into history: Personal documents for an age of Franco-Ontarian reculturation. *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 36(3), 79-106.

Lessard, C., Ferrer, C. & Desroches, F. (1997). Pour un monde démocratique: l'éducation dans une perspective planétaire. *Revue des sciences de l'éducation*, 23(1), 3-16.

Levasseur-Ouimet, F. (1999). *1899-1999, Saint-Joachim, la première paroisse catholique d'Edmonton*. Edmonton, AB: Author.

Levasseur-Ouimet, F. (1994). *Les besoins éducatifs particuliers des élèves francophones vivant en milieu minoritaire*. Unpublished Report. Edmonton: Faculté Saint-Jean, University of Alberta.

Levasseur-Ouimet, F. (1991). Chez-nous, nous vivons comme ça. *Échange: La revue pédagogique du Conseil français*, Volume XVII(I), 4-14 (édition spéciale). Edmonton, AB: Conseil français de l'Alberta Teachers' Association.

Lévesque, S. (2004). History and social studies in Québec. In A. Sears & I. Wright (Eds.), *Challenges & prospects for Canadian social studies* (pp. 55-72). Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press.

Lewis, M. (1990). Social dynamics in the feminist classroom. Interrupting patriarchy: politics, resistance, and transformation in the feminist classroom. *Harvard Educational Review*, 60(4), 467-488.

Lintschinger, Klaus & Capra, Bernt (1991). *Mindwalk: A film for passionate thinkers* [videorecording]. Hollywood, CA: Paramount Pictures.

Lyotard, J.F. (1984). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge.* Trans. Geoff Bennington & Brian Massumi (pp. xxiii-67) and Régis Duran (pp. 71-82). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (2005). *Kindergarten to grade 8 social studies: Manitoba curriculum framework of outcomes.* Retrieved May 3, 2005 from Manitoba Education: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ks4/cur/socstud/framework/index.html

MacLennan, H. (1945). *Two solitudes*. Toronto, ON: Collins.

Marchand, P. (2005). *Ghost Empire: How the French almost conquered North America.* Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart Ltd.

Martineau, R. & Laville, C. (2000). L'histoire: Voie royale vers la citoyenneté? In A. Marsolais & L. Brossard (Eds.), *Non-violence et citoyenneté: Un 'vivre-ensemble' qui s'apprend* (pp. 51-63). Sainte-Foy, QC: Éditions MultiMondes.

Mathison, S., Ross, E.W. & Vinson, K.D. (2001). Defining the social studies curriculum: The influence of and resistance to curriculum standards and testing in social studies. In E.W. Ross (Ed.), *The social studies curriculum: Purposes, problems, and possibilities* (pp. 87-102). Revised edition. New York: State University of New York Press.

McDonald, K. (2006). Learning whose nation? In Y. Kanu (Ed.), *Curriculum as cultural practice: Postcolonial imaginations* (pp. 302-322). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

McKay, R.A. & Gibson, S.E. (2004). *Social studies for the 21st century: A review of current literature and research.* Mellen Studies in Education, v. 97. Lampeter, Ceredigion, Wales: The Edwin Mellen Press.

McLean, A. (2007, April 18). Alberta Francophones demand recognition after flag bid dumped: Group calls for pressure on MLAs to fly fleur-de-lys as symbol. *Edmonton Journal.*

McLeod, J. (2000). *Beginning postcolonialism.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Merriam, B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Merryfield, M. (2001). Moving the center of global education: From imperial world views that divide the world to double consciousness, contrapuntal pedagogy, hybridity, and cross-cultural competence. In W.B. Stanley (Ed.), *Critical issues in social studies research for the 21st century* (pp. 180-207). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Merryfield, M. & Subedi, B. (2001). Decolonizing the mind for world-centered global Education. In E.W. Ross (Ed.), *The social studies curriculum: Purposes, problems, and possibilities,* revised edition (pp. 277-290). New York: State University of New York Press.

Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (2004). *Programme de formation de l'école québécoise: Enseignement secondaire, premier cycle*. Retrieved May 5, 2005 from Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec: http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/

Moke Ngala, V. (2006). *L'intégration des jeunes des familles immigrantes francophones d'origine africaine à la vie scolaire dans les écoles secondaires francophones dans un milieu urbain en Alberta: conditions et incidences*. Unpublished Master's Thesis. Edmonton, Alberta: Campus Saint-Jean, University of Alberta.

Nakagawa, A.M. (Director) (2005). *Between: living in the hyphen* [videorecording]. Montréal, QC: National Film Board of Canada.

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (2005). *National Council for the Social Studies*. Retrieved April 29, 2005 from the NCSS: http://www.ncss.org/

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) (1993). A vision of powerful teaching and learning in the social studies: Building social understanding and civic efficacy. *Social Education*, 213-223.

Nelson, J. (2001). Defining social studies. In W.B. Stanley (Ed.), *Critical issues in social studies research for the 21st century* (pp. 15-38). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Norquay, N. (2000). Where is here? *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 8(1), 7-21.

Novak, M. (1978). *Ascent of the mountain, flight of the dove: An invitation to religious studies*. Revised Edition. San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row.

Nussbaum, M.C. (1995). *Poetic justice: The literary imagination and public life*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) (2007). *L'OIF*. Retrieved April 13, 2007, from: http://www.francophonie.org/

Oxford University Press (2005). *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Retrieved June 15, 2005: http://80-dictionary.oed.com.login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/

Parker, W.C. (2003). Teaching Democracy: Unity and Diversity in Public Life. New York: Teachers College Press.

Parker, W.C. & Jarolimek, J. (2001). *A sampler of curriculum standards for social studies: Expectations of excellence*. National Council for the Social Studies. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill Prentice Hall.

Patenaude, J. & Moke Ngala, V. (Directors) (2007). *Karibuni Bienvenue* [videorecording]. Edmonton, AB: Société Radio-Canada & Sharing Visions/Rêveries Inc.

Peters, M.A. & Turbules, N.C. (2004). *Poststructuralism and educational research.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Pinar, W. (2004). *What is curriculum theory?* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Probyn, E. (1996). *Outside belongings*. New York: Routledge.

Quell, C. (2002). Official languages and immigration: Obstacles and opportunities for immigrants and communities. Retrieved October 3, 2006, from http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca/archives/sst_es/2002/obstacle/obstacle_e.htm

Quell, C. (1998). Citizenship concepts among Francophone immigrants in Ontario. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 30(3), 173-190.

Richardson, G. (2006). Singular nation, plural possibilities: Reimagining curriculum as third space. In Y. Kanu (Ed.), *Curriculum as cultural practice: Postcolonial imaginations* (pp. 283-301). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Richardson, G.H. (2004). Global education and the challenge of globalization. In A. Sears & I. Wright (Eds.), *Challenges & prospects for Canadian social studies* (pp. 138-149). Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press.

Richardson, G.H. (2002a). A border within: The Western Canada protocol for social studies education and the politics of national identity construction. *Revista Mexicana de Estudios Canadienses*, 4, 31-46.

Richardson, G.H. (2002b). *The death of the good Canadian: Teachers, national identities, and the social studies curriculum.* New York: Peter Lang.

Richardson, L. (2001). Getting personal: writing-stories, *Qualitative Studies in Education*, 14(1), 33-38.

Richardson, L. (1997). *Fields of play: Constructing an academic life*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Richardson, L. & St. Pierre, E.A. (2005). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*, 3rd edition (pp. 959-977). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Rodriguez, R. (1982). *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodriguez.* New York: Bantam Books.

Roser, N.L. & Keehn, S. (2002). Fostering thought, talk, and inquiry: Linking literature and social studies, *The Reading Teacher*, 55(5), 416-426.

Ross, E.W. (2001a). Social studies teachers and curriculum. In E.W. Ross (Ed.), *The social studies curriculum: Purposes, problems, and possibilities*, revised edition (pp. 3-15). New York: State University of New York Press.

Ross, E.W. (2001b). Remaking the social studies curriculum. In E.W. Ross (Ed.), *The social studies curriculum: Purposes, problems, and possibilities* (pp. 313-327). Revised edition. New York: State University of New York Press.

Roy, G. (2002). *Ma petite rue qui m'a menée autour du monde*. Saint-Boniface, MB: Éditions du Blé.

Rushdie, S. (1991). *Imaginary homelands: Essays and criticism 1981-1991*. London: Granta Books in association with Penguin Books.

Said, E. (1993). *Culture and imperialism*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Said, E. (1978/1994). *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Salvio, P. (1998). The teacher/scholar as melancholic: Excavating scholarly and pedagogic (s)crypts in Fugitive pieces. *JCT: Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 14(2), 15-23.

Sears, A. (2004). In search of good citizens: Citizenship education and social studies in Canada. In A. Sears & I. Wright (Eds.), *Challenges & prospects for Canadian social studies* (pp. 90-106). Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press.

Sears, A. (1997). Social studies in Canada. In Wright, Ian & Sears, Alan (eds.) *Trends & issues in Canadian social studies* (pp. 18-38). Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press.

Seixas, P. (2002). The purposes of teaching Canadian history. *Canadian Social Studies*, 36(2). Retrieved January 15, 2003 from: http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/css/Css_36_2/index36_2.htm

Sheehan, N. (1979a). Character training and the cultural heritage: An historical comparison of Canadian elementary readers. *The Curriculum in Canada in Historical Perspective*. CSSE YEARBOOK 1979: 77-84.

Sheehan, N. (1979b). Education, the society and the curriculum in Alberta, 1905-1980: An overview. In N. Sheehan, J. Wilson & D. Jones (Eds.), *Schools in the west: Essays in Canadian educational history* (pp. 39-56). Calgary: Detselig Entreprises Limited.

Shields, P. & Ramsay, D. (2004). Social studies across English Canada. In A. Sears & I. Wright (Eds.), *Challenges & prospects for Canadian social studies* (pp. 38-54). Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press.

Simon, R.I. (1995). *Face to face with alterity: Postmodern Jewish identity and the eros of pedagogy*. In J. Gallop (Ed.) *Pedagogy: The question of impersonation* (pp. 90-105). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Slemon, S. (2001). Post-colonial critical theories. In G. Castle (Ed.), *Postcolonial discourses: An anthology* (pp. 99-116). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Smith, D.G. (2006). Postcolonialism and globalization: Thoughts towards a new hermeneutic pedagogy. In Y. Kanu (Ed.), *Curriculum as cultural practice: Postcolonial imaginations* (pp. 251-259). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Smith, D. (2003 [1985]). Les francophones de l'Alberta: aperçu historique. In N. Kermoal (Ed.), *Variations sur un thème: la francophonie albertaine dans tous ses états* (pp. 13-45). Edmonton, AB: Salon d'histoire de la francophonie albertaine.

Smith, D.G. (2000). The specific challenges of globalization for teaching and vice versa. *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 46(1), 7-26.

Smits, H. (2001). Is there a legitimate 'Luddite' response to technology in the social studies? *Canadian Social Studies*, 35(2). Retrieved January 15, 2003 from: http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/css/Css_35_2/index35_2.htm

Spivak, G. (1995). Can the subaltern speak? In B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths & H. Tiffin (Eds.), *Post-colonial studies reader* (pp. 24-35). London & New York: Routledge.

Stanley, T. (2006). Whose public? Whose memory? Racisms, grand narratives, and Canadian history. In R. Sandwell (Ed.), *To the past: history education, public memory, and citizenship in Canada* (pp. 32-49). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Stanley, W.B. (2001). Social studies: Problems and possibilities. In W.B. Stanley (Ed.), *Critical issues in social studies research for the 21st century* (pp. 1-13). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Stebbins, R. (2000). *The French enigma: Survival and development in Canada's Francophone societies*. Calgary, AB: Detselig Entreprises Ltd.

Steger, Manfred B. (2003). *Globalization: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Steinberg, S. & Kincheloe, J. (2001). Setting the context for critical multi/inter-culturalism: The power of blocs of class elitism, white supremacy, and patriarchy. In Steinberg, S. (Ed.), *Multi/Intercultural conversations: A reader* (pp. 3-30). New York: Peter Lang.

Streets, H. (2003). Empire and "the nation": Institutional practice, pedagogy, and nation in the classroom. In A. Burton (Ed.), *After the imperial turn: Thinking with and through the nation* (pp. 57-69). Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Stromquist, N.P. & Monkman, K. (2000). Defining globalization and assessing its implications on knowledge and education. In N.P. Stromquist & K. Monkman (Eds.), *Globalization and education: Integration and contestation across cultures* (pp. 3-25). Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield.

Sugars, C. (2002, Spring). National posts: Theorizing Canadian postcolonialism. *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 25, 15-41.

Sumara, D.J. (2002a). Creating commonplaces for interpretation: Literary anthropology and literacy education research, *Journal of Literacy Research*, 34(2), 237-260.

Sumara, D.J. (2002b). *Why reading literature in school still matters: Imagination, interpretation, insight*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Sumara, D. & Davis, B. (1999). Interrupting heteronormativity: Toward a queer curriculum theory. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 29(2), 191-208.

Sumara, D., Davis, B. & Laidlaw, L. (2001). Canadian identity and curriculum theory: An ecological, postmodern perspective, *Canadian Journal of Education* 26(2), 144-163.

Sumara, D., Davis, B. & van der Wey, D. (1998). The pleasure of thinking, *Language Arts*, 76(2), 135-143.

Taubman, P. (2000). Teaching without hope: What is really at stake in the standards movement, high stakes testing, and the drive for "practical reforms." *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, Fall 2000, 19-33.

Taylor, C. (1994). The politics of recognition. In A. Gutmann (Ed.), *Multiculturalism* (pp. 25-73). Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Tétu, M. (1992). *La francophonie: histoire, problématique et perspectives*. Montréal: Guérin.

Thompson, L.A. (2004). Identity and the forthcoming Alberta social studies curriculum: A postcolonial reading. *Canadian Social Studies*, 38(3). Retrieved May 1, 2005 from: http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/css/Css_38_3/index38_3.htm

Thompson, L.A. (2001). *L'enseignement de la francophonie mondiale: La situation actuelle dans les écoles secondaires francophones de l'Alberta*. Unpublished Master's thesis. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta, Faculté Saint-Jean.

Tomkins, G.S. (1986). *A common countenance: Stability and change in the Canadian curriculum*. Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada.

Tomkins, G.S. (1979). Towards a history of curriculum development in Canada. *The Curriculum in Canada in Historical Perspective*. CSSE YEARBOOK 1979, 1-17.

Trottier, A., Munro, K.J. & Allaire, G. (1980). *Aspects du passé franco-albertain*. Edmonton, AB: Salon d'histoire de la francophonie albertaine.

Tupper, J. (2002). The gendering of citizenship in social studies curriculum. *Canadian Social Studies*, 36(3). Retrieved January 15, 2003 from: http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/css/Css_36_3/index36_3.htm

Vanier, J. (2003). *Finding peace.* Toronto, ON: House of Anansi Press.

Varma-Joshi, M. (2004). Understanding multiculturalism in social studies classes. In A. Sears and I. Wright (Eds.), *Challenges and prospects for Canadian social studies* (pp. 150-163). Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press.

Vinson, K.D. & Ross, E.W. (2001). In search of the social studies curriculum: Standardization, diversity and a conflict of appearances. In W.B. Stanley (Ed.), *Critical issues in social studies research for the 21st century* (pp. 39-71). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.

Wear, D. (1997). On making spectacles of ourselves: Resisting the medicalized body. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* (Summer), 27-31.

Willinsky, J. (2006). High school postcolonial: As the students ran ahead with the theory. In Y. Kanu (Ed.), *Curriculum as cultural practice: Postcolonial imaginations* (pp. 95-115). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Willinsky, J. (1998). *Learning to divide the world: Education at empire's end.* Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press.

Young, R.J.C. (2003). *Postcolonialism: A very short introduction.* London: Oxford University Press.